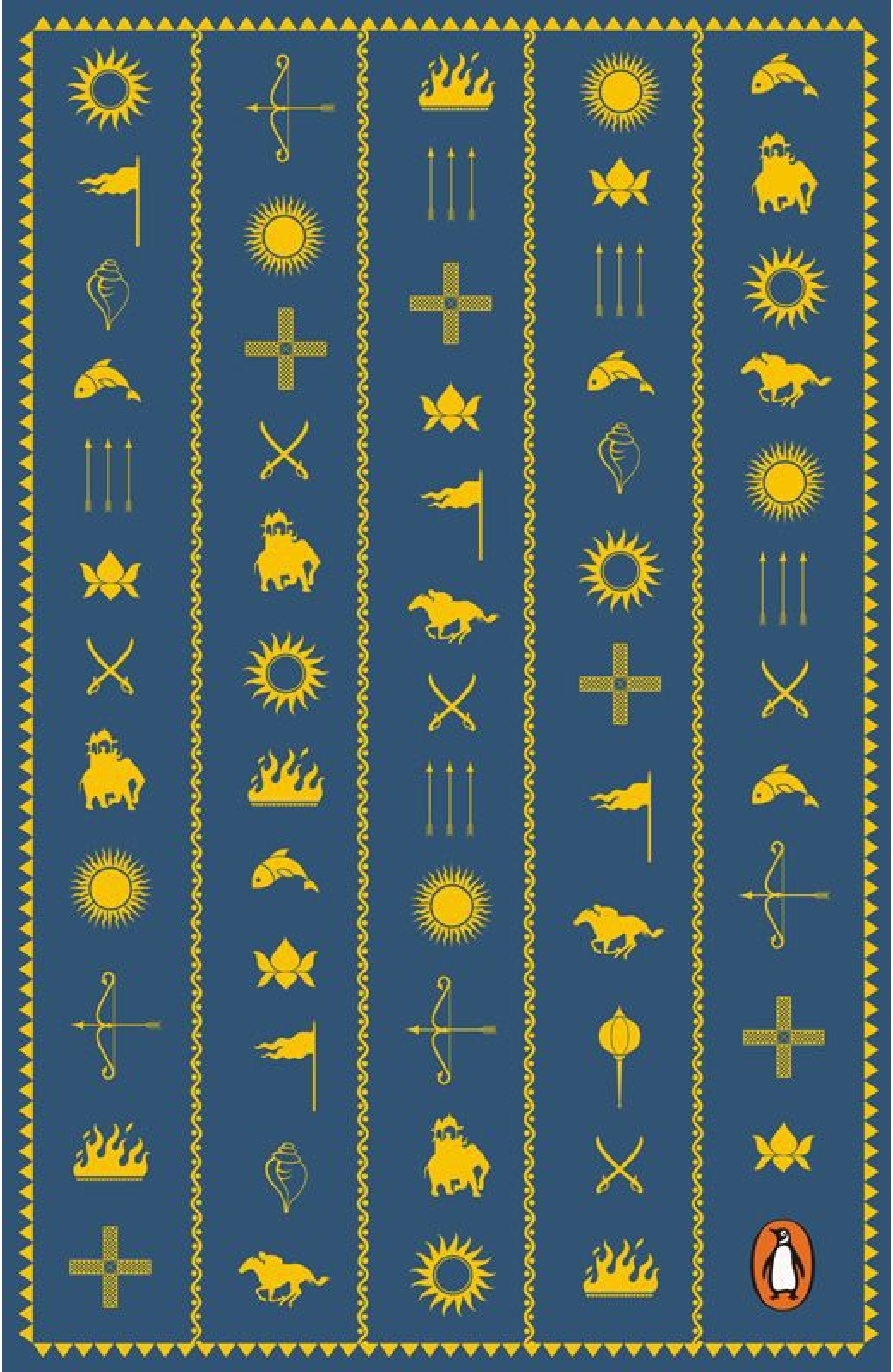


Penguin

The Mahabharata

Volume 3

(Sections 33 to 44)

Translated by
BIBEK DEBROY

PENGUIN BOOKS

Contents

About the Translator

Bibek Debroy is an economist and is Research Professor (Centre of Policy Research) and Contributing Editor (Indian Express group). He has worked in universities, research institutes, industry and for the government. He has published books, papers and popular articles in economics. But he has also published in Indology and translated (into English) the Vedas, the Puranas, the Upanishads and the Gita (Penguin India, 2005). His book *Sarama and her Children: The Dog in Indian Myth* (Penguin India, 2008) splices his interest in Hinduism with his love for dogs. He is currently translating the remaining volumes of the unabridged Mahabharata.

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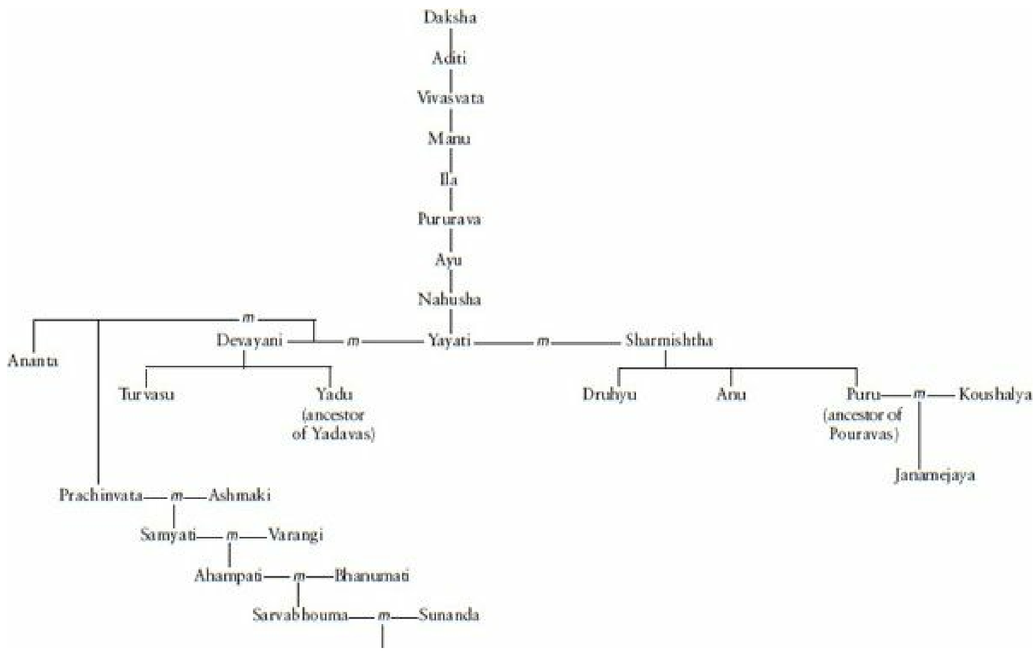
For Suparna

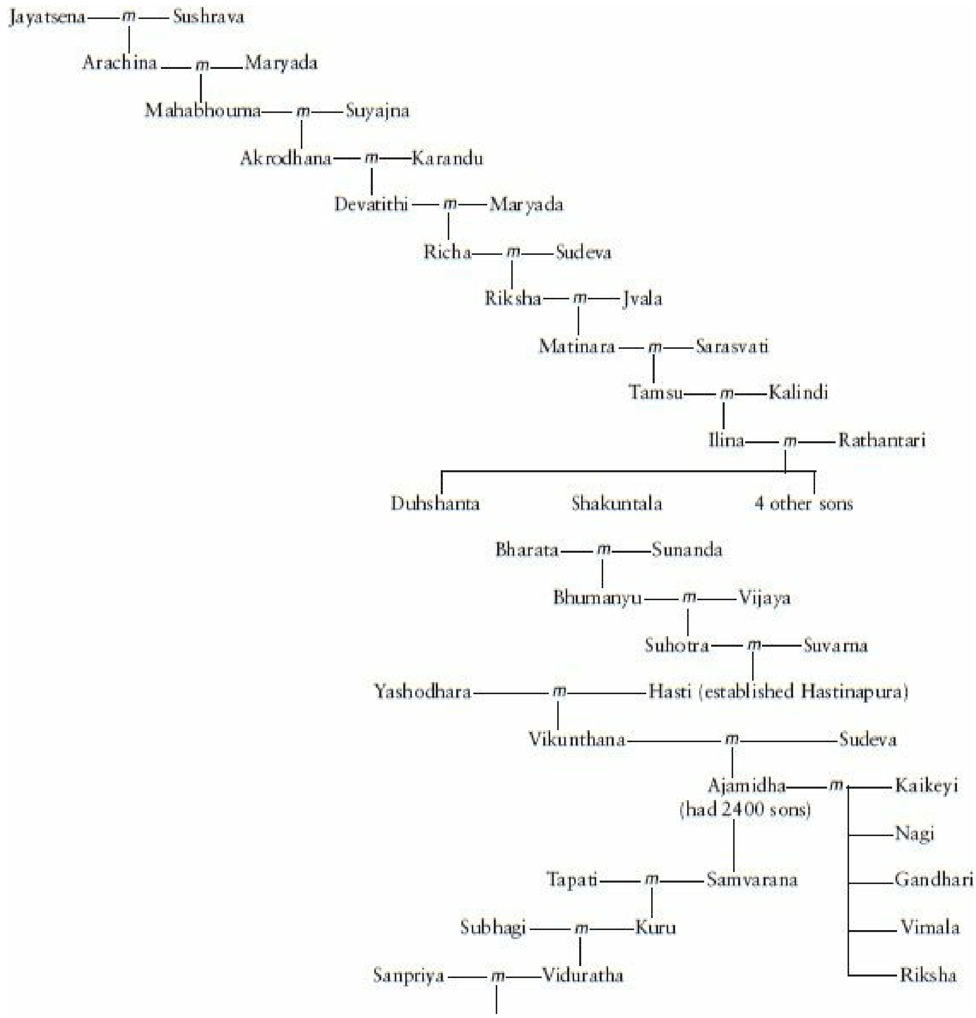
Ardha bhāryā manuṣyasya bhāryā śreṣṭhatamaḥ sakhā
Bhāryā mulam trivargasya bhāryā mitram mariṣyataḥ

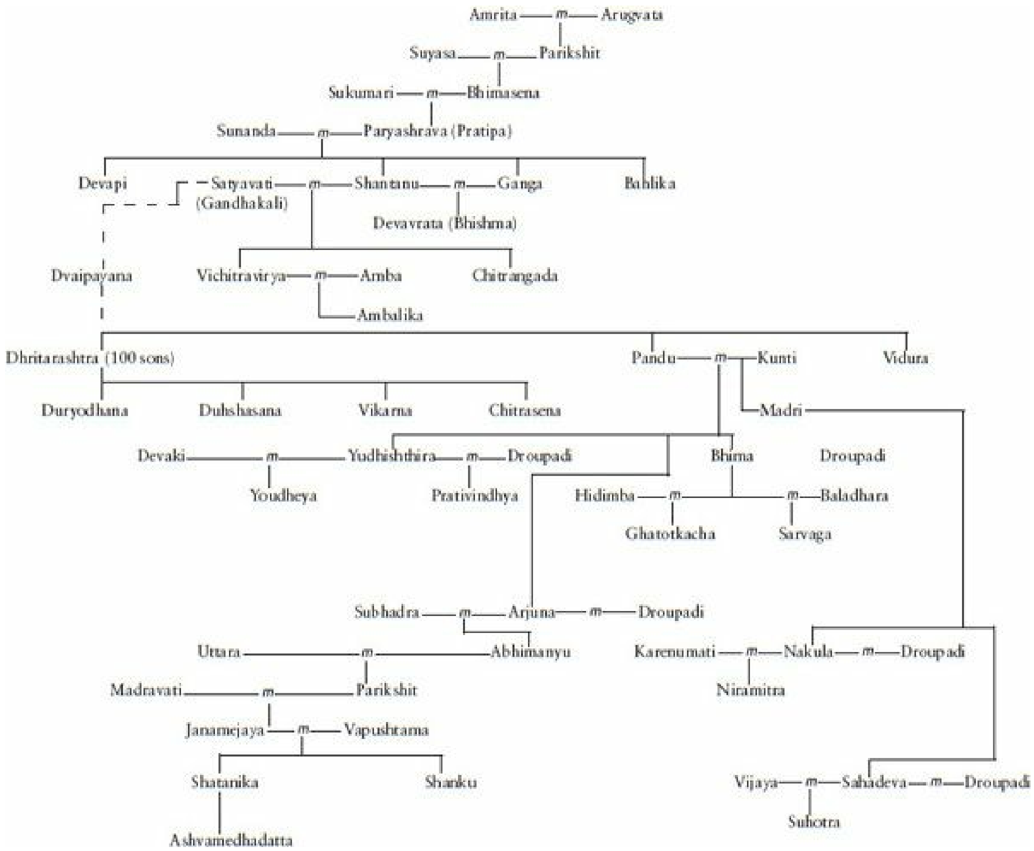
Mahabharata (1/68/40)

Family Tree

Bharata/Puru Lineage



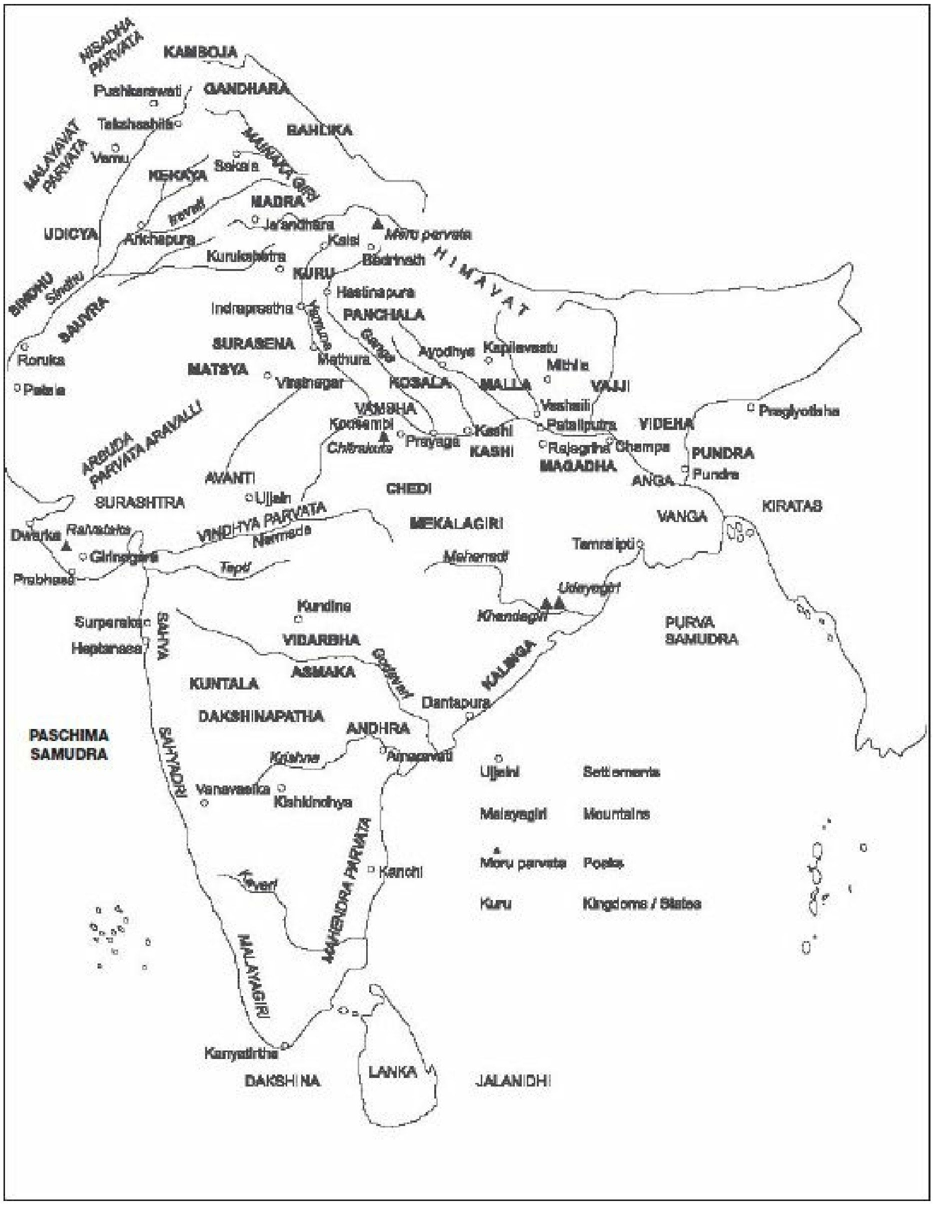

Jayatsena — m — Sushrava
Arachina — m — Maryada
Mahabhouma — m — Suyajna
Akrodhana — m — Karandu
Devatithi — m — Maryada
Richa — m — Sudeva
Riksha — m — Jvala
Matinara — m — Sarasvati
Tamsu — m — Kalindi
Ilina — m — Rathantari
Duhshanta
Shakuntala
4 other sons
Bharata — m — Sunanda
Bhumanyu — m — Vijaya
Suhotra — m — Suvarna
Yashodhara — m — Hasti (established Hastinapura)
Vikunthana — m — Sudeva
Ajamidha — m — Kaikeyi
(had 2400 sons)
Nagi
Gandhari
Vimala
Riksha
Tapati — m — Samvarana
Subhagi — m — Kuru
Sanpriya — m — Viduratha



Amrita — m — Arugvata
Suyasa — m — Parikshit
Sukumari — m — Bhimasena
Sunanda — m — Paryashrava (Pratipa)
Devapi
Satyavati (Gandhakali) — m — Shantanu — m — Ganga
Bahlika
Devavrata (Bhishma)
Dvaipayana
Vichitravirya — m — Amba
Ambalika
Chitrangada
Dhritarashtra (100 sons)
Pandu — m — Kunti
Madri
Vidura
Duryodhana
Duhshasana
Vikarna
Chitrasena
Devaki — m — Yudhishthira — m — Droupadi
Youdheya
Prativindhya
Bhima
Droupadi
Hidimba — m
m — Baladhara
Ghatotkacha
Sarvaga
Subhadra — m — Arjuna — m — Droupadi
Uttara — m — Abhimanyu
Karenumati — m — Nakula — m — Droupadi
Niramitra
Madravati — m — Parikshit
Janamejaya — m — Vapushtama
Shatanika
Shanku
Ashvamedhadatta
Vijaya — m — Sahadeva — m — Droupadi
Suhotra

Map of Bharatavarsha

BHARATAVARSHA (SIXTH CENTURY BCE)



Introduction

The Hindu tradition has an amazingly large corpus of religious texts, spanning Vedas, Vedanta (*brahmanas*,[1] *aranyakas*,[2] Upanishads,), Vedangas,[3] *smritis*, Puranas, dharmashastras and *itihasa*. For most of these texts, especially if one excludes classical Sanskrit literature, we don't quite know when they were composed and by whom, not that one is looking for single authors. Some of the minor Puranas (Upa Purana) are of later vintage. For instance, the Bhavishya Purana (which is often listed as a major Purana or Maha Purana) mentions Queen Victoria.

In the listing of the corpus above figures itihasa, translated into English as history. History doesn't entirely capture the nuance of itihasa, which is better translated as 'this is indeed what happened'. Itihasa isn't myth or fiction. It is a chronicle of what happened; it is fact. Or so runs the belief. And itihasa consists of India's two major epics, the Ramayana and the Mahabharata. The former is believed to have been composed as poetry and the latter as prose. This isn't quite correct. The Ramayana has segments in prose and the Mahabharata has segments in poetry. Itihasa doesn't quite belong to the category of religious texts in a way that the Vedas and Vedanta are religious. However, the dividing line between what is religious and what is not is fuzzy. After all, itihasa is also about attaining the objectives of *dharma*,[4] *artha*,[5] *kama*[6] and *moksha*[7] and the Mahabharata includes Hinduism's most important spiritual text—the Bhagavad Gita.

The epics are not part of the *shruti* tradition. That tradition is like revelation, without any composer. The epics are part of the *smriti* tradition. At the time they were composed, there was no question of texts being written down. They were recited, heard, memorized and passed down through the generations. But the smriti tradition had composers. The Ramayana was composed by Valmiki, regarded as the first poet or *kavi*. The word kavi has a secondary meaning as poet or rhymer. The primary meaning of kavi is someone who is wise. And in that sense, the composer of the Mahabharata was no less wise. This was Vedavyasa or Vyasadeva. He was so named because he classified (*vyasa*) the Vedas. Vedavyasa or Vyasadeva isn't a proper name. It is a title. Once in a while, in accordance with the needs of the era, the Vedas need to be classified. Each such person obtains the title and there have been twenty-eight Vyasadevas so far.

At one level, the question about who composed the Mahabharata is pointless. According to popular belief and according to what the Mahabharata itself states, it was composed by Krishna Dvaipayana Vedavyasa (Vyasadeva). But the text was not composed and cast in stone at a single point in time. Multiple authors kept adding layers and embellishing it. Sections just kept getting added and it is no one's suggestion that Krishna Dvaipayana Vedavyasa composed the text of the Mahabharata as it stands

today.

Consequently, the Mahabharata is far more unstructured than the Ramayana. The major sections of the Ramayana are known as *kanda*s and one meaning of the word kanda is the stem or trunk of a tree, suggesting solidity. The major sections of the Mahabharata are known as *parva*s and while one meaning of the word parva is limb or member or joint, in its nuance there is greater fluidity in the word parva than in kanda.

The Vyasadeva we are concerned with had a proper name of Krishna Dvaipayana. He was born on an island (*dvipa*). That explains the Dvaipayana part of the name. He was dark. That explains the Krishna part of the name. (It wasn't only the incarnation of Vishnu who had the name of Krishna.) Krishna Dvaipayana Vedavyasa was also related to the protagonists of the Mahabharata story. To go back to the origins, the Ramayana is about the solar dynasty, while the Mahabharata is about the lunar dynasty. As is to be expected, the lunar dynasty begins with Soma (the moon) and goes down through Pururava (who married the famous apsara Urvashi), Nahusha and Yayati. Yayati became old, but wasn't ready to give up the pleasures of life. He asked his sons to temporarily loan him their youth. All but one refused. The ones who refused were cursed that they would never be kings, and this includes the Yadavas (descended from Yadu). The one who agreed was Puru and the lunar dynasty continued through him. Puru's son Duhshanta was made famous by Kalidasa in the Duhshanta–Shakuntala story and their son was Bharata, contributing to the name of Bharatavarsha. Bharata's grandson was Kuru. We often tend to think of the Kouravas as the evil protagonists in the Mahabharata story and the Pandavas as the good protagonists. Since Kuru was a common ancestor, the appellation Kourava applies equally to Yudhishthira and his brothers and Duryodhana and his brothers. Kuru's grandson was Shantanu. Through Satyavati, Shantanu fathered Chitrangada and Vichitravirya. However, the sage Parashara had already fathered Krishna Dvaipayana through Satyavati. And Shantanu had already fathered Bhishma through Ganga. Dhritarasthra and Pandu were fathered on Vichitravirya's wives by Krishna Dvaipayana.

The story of the epic is also about these antecedents and consequents. The core Mahabharata story is known to every Indian and is normally understood as a dispute between the Kouravas (descended from Dhritarashtra) and the Pandavas (descended from Pandu). However, this is a distilled version, which really begins with Shantanu. The non-distilled version takes us to the roots of the genealogical tree and at several points along this tree we confront a problem with impotence/sterility/death, resulting in offspring through a surrogate father. Such sons were accepted in that day and age. Nor was this a lunar dynasty problem alone. In the Ramayana, Dasharatha of the solar dynasty also had an infertility problem, corrected through a sacrifice. To return to the genealogical tree, the Pandavas won the Kurukshetra war. However, their five sons through Droupadi were killed. So was Bhima's son Ghatotkacha, fathered on Hidimba.

As was Arjuna's son Abhimanyu, fathered on Subhadra. Abhimanyu's son Parikshit inherited the throne in Hastinapura, but was killed by a serpent. Parikshit's son was Janamejaya.

Krishna Dvaipayana Vedavyasa's powers of composition were remarkable. Having classified the Vedas, he composed the Mahabharata in 100,000 shlokas or couplets. Today's Mahabharata text doesn't have that many shlokas, even if the Hari Vamsha (regarded as the epilogue to the Mahabharata) is included. One reaches around 90,000 shlokas. That too, is a gigantic number. (The Mahabharata is almost four times the size of the Ramayana and is longer than any other epic anywhere in the world.) For a count of 90,000 Sanskrit shlokas, we are talking about something in the neighbourhood of two million words. The text of the Mahabharata tells us that Krishna Dvaipayana finished this composition in three years. This doesn't necessarily mean that he composed 90,000 shlokas. The text also tells us that there are three versions to the Mahabharata. The original version was called Jaya and had 8,800 shlokas. This was expanded to 24,000 shlokas and called Bharata. Finally, it was expanded to 90,000 (or 100,000) shlokas and called Mahabharata.

Krishna Dvaipayana didn't rest even after that. He composed the eighteen Maha Puranas, adding another 400,000 shlokas. Having composed the Mahabharata, he taught it to his disciple Vaishampayana. When Parikshit was killed by a serpent, Janamejaya organized a snake-sacrifice to destroy the serpents. With all the sages assembled there, Vaishampayana turned up and the assembled sages wanted to know the story of the Mahabharata, as composed by Krishna Dvaipayana. Janamejaya also wanted to know why Parikshit had been killed by the serpent. That's the background against which the epic is recited. However, there is another round of recounting too. Much later, the sages assembled for a sacrifice in Naimisharanya and asked Lomaharshana (alternatively, Romaharshana) to recite what he had heard at Janamejaya's snake-sacrifice. Lomaharshana was a *suta*, the sutas being charioteers and bards or raconteurs. As the son of a suta, Lomaharshana is also referred to as Souti. But Souti or Lomaharshana aren't quite his proper names. His proper name is Ugrashrava. Souti refers to his birth. He owes the name Lomaharshana to the fact that the body-hair (*loma* or *roma*) stood up (*harshana*) on hearing his tales. Within the text therefore, two people are telling the tale. Sometimes it is Vaishampayana and sometimes it is Lomaharshana. Incidentally, the stories of the Puranas are recounted by Lomaharshana, without Vaishampayana intruding. Having composed the Puranas, Krishna Dvaipayana taught them to his disciple Lomaharshana. For what it is worth, there are scholars who have used statistical tests to try and identify the multiple authors of the Mahabharata.

As we are certain there were multiple authors rather than a single one, the question of when the Mahabharata was composed is somewhat pointless. It wasn't composed on a single date. It was composed over a span of more than 1000 years, perhaps between

800 BCE and 400 ACE. It is impossible to be more accurate than that. There is a difference between dating the composition and dating the incidents, such as the date of the Kurukshetra war. Dating the incidents is both subjective and controversial and irrelevant for the purposes of this translation. A timeline of 1000 years isn't short. But even then, the size of the corpus is nothing short of amazing.

Familiarity with Sanskrit is dying out. The first decades of the twenty-first century are quite unlike the first decades of the twentieth. Lamentation over what is inevitable serves no purpose. English is increasingly becoming the global language, courtesy colonies (North America, South Asia, East Asia, Australia, New Zealand, Africa) rather than the former colonizer. If familiarity with the corpus is not to die out, it needs to be accessible in English.

There are many different versions or recensions of the Mahabharata. However, between 1919 and 1966, the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute (BORI) in Pune produced what has come to be known as the critical edition. This is an authenticated text produced by a board of scholars and seeks to eliminate later interpolations, unifying the text across the various regional versions. This is the text followed in this translation. One should also mention that the critical edition's text is not invariably smooth. Sometimes, the transition from one shloka to another is abrupt, because the intervening shloka has been weeded out. With the intervening shloka included, a non-critical version of the text sometimes makes better sense. On a few occasions, I have had the temerity to point this out in the notes which I have included in my translation.

It took a long time for this critical edition to be put together. The exercise began in 1919. Without the Hari Vamsha, the complete critical edition became available in 1966. And with the Hari Vamsha, the complete critical edition became available in 1970. Before this, there were regional variations in the text and the main versions were available from Bengal, Bombay and the south. However, now, one should stick to the critical edition, though there are occasional instances where there are reasons for dissatisfaction with what the scholars of the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute have accomplished. But in all fairness, there are two published versions of the critical edition. The first one has the bare bones of the critical edition's text. The second has all the regional versions collated, with copious notes. The former is for the ordinary reader, assuming he/she knows Sanskrit. And the latter is for the scholar. Consequently, some popular beliefs no longer find a place in the critical edition's text. For example, it is believed that Vedavyasa dictated the text to Ganesha, who wrote it down. But Ganesha had a condition before accepting. Vedavyasa would have to dictate continuously, without stopping. Vedavyasa threw in a counter-condition. Ganesha would have to

understand each couplet before he wrote it down. To flummox Ganesha and give himself time to think, Vedavyasa threw in some cryptic verses. This attractive anecdote has been excised from the critical edition's text. Barring material that is completely religious (specific hymns or the Bhagavad Gita), the Sanskrit text is reasonably easy to understand. Oddly, I have had the most difficulty with things that Vidura has sometimes said. Arya has today come to connote ethnicity. Originally, it meant language. That is, those who spoke Sanskrit were Aryas. Those who did not speak Sanskrit were mlecchas. Vidura is supposed to have been skilled in the mlechha language. Is that the reason why some of Vidura's statements seem obscure? In similar vein, in popular renderings, when Droupadi is being disrobed, she prays to Krishna. Krishna provides the never-ending stream of garments that stump Duhshasana. The critical edition has excised the prayer to Krishna. The never-ending stream of garments is given as an extraordinary event. However, there is no intervention from Krishna.

How is the Mahabharata classified? The core component is the couplet or shloka. Several such shlokas form a chapter or *adhyaya*. Several adhyayas form a parva. Most people probably think that the Mahabharata has eighteen parvas. This is true, but there is another 100-parva classification that is indicated in the text itself. That is, the adhyayas can be classified either according to eighteen parvas or according to 100 parvas. The table (given on pp. xxiii–xxvi), based on the critical edition, should make this clear. As the table shows, the present critical edition only has ninety-eight parvas of the 100-parva classification, though the 100 parvas are named in the text.

Eighteen-parva classification	*100-parva classification*	*Number of adhyayas*	*Number of shlokas*
(1) Adi	1) Anukramanika[8]	1	210
	2) Parvasamgraha	1	243
	3) Poushya	1	195
	4) Pouloma	9	153
	5) Astika	41	1025
	6) Adi-vamshavatarana	5	257
	7) Sambhava	65	2394
	8) Jatugriha-daha	15	373
	9) Hidimba-vadha	6	169
	10) Baka-vadha	8	206
	11) Chaitraratha	21	557
	12) Droupadi-svayamvara	12	263
	13) Vaivahika	6	155
	14) Viduragamana	7	174

[8] Anukramanika is sometimes called Anukramani.

Eighteen-parva classification	*100-parva classification*	*Number of adhyayas*	*Number of shlokas*
	15) Rajya-labha	1	50
	16) Arjuna-vanavasa	11	298
	17) Subhadra-harana	2	57
	18) Harana harika	1	82
	19) Khandava-daha	12	344
		Total = 225	Total = 7205
(2) Sabha	20) Sabha	11	429
	21) Mantra	6	222
	22) Jarasandha-vadha	5	195
	23) Digvijaya	7	188
	24) Rajasuya	3	97
	25) Arghabhiharana	4	99
	26) Shishupala-vadha	6	191
	27) Dyuta	23	734
	28) Anudyuta	7	232
		Total = 72	Total = 2387
(3) Aranyaka	29) Aranyaka	11	327
	30) Kirmira-vadha	1	75
	31) Kairata	30	1158
	32) Indralokabhigamana	37	1157
	33) Tirtha-yatra	74	2422
	34) Jatasura-vadha	1	61
	35) Yaksha-yuddha	18	710
	36) Ajagara	6	201
	37) Markandeya-samasya	43	1656
	38) Droupadi-Satyabhama-sambada	3	88
	39) Ghosha-yatra	19	519
	40) Mriga-svapna-bhaya	1	16
	41) Vrihi-drounika	3	117
	42) Droupadi-harana	36	1247
	43) Kundala-harana	11	294
	44) Araneya	5	191
		Total = 299	Total = 10239
(4) Virata	45) Vairata	12	271
	46) Kichaka-vadha	11	353
	47) Go-grahana	39	933
	48) Vaivahika	5	179
		Total = 67	Total = 1736

Eighteen-parva classification	*100-parva classification*	*Number of adhyayas*	*Number of shlokas*
(5) Udyoga	49) Udyoga	21	575
	50) Sanjaya-yana	11	274
	51) Prajagara	9	541
	52) Sanatsujata	4	121
	53) Yana-sandhi	24	709
	54) Bhagavad-dhyana	65	2053
	55) Karnopani-vadha	14	351
	56) Abhiniryana	4	169
	57) Bhishmabhishechana	4	122
	58) Uluka-yana	4	100
	59) Rathatiratha-sankhyana	9	231
	60) Ambopakhyana	28	755
		Total = 197	Total = 6001
(6) Bhishma	61) Jambukhanda-vinirmana	11	377
	62) Bhumi	2	87
	63) Bhagavad-gita	27	974
	64) Bhishma-vadha	77	3943
		Total = 117	Total = 5381
(7) Drona	65) Dronabhisheka	15	634
	66) Samshaptaka-vadha	16	717
	67) Abhimanyu-vadha	20	640
	68) Pratijna	9	365
	69) Jayadratha-vadha	61	2834
	70) Ghatotkacha-vadha	33	1645
	71) Drona-vadha	11	692
	72) Narayanastra-moksha	8	542
		Total = 173	Total = 8069
(8) Karna	73) Karna-vadha	69	3870
(9) Shalya	74) Shalya-vadha	16	1074
	75) Hrada-pravesha	12	664
	76) Tirtha-yatra	25	1258
	77) Gada-yuddha	11	545
		Total = 64	Total = 3541
(10) Souptika	78) Souptika	9	514
	79) Aishika	9	257
		Total = 18	Total = 771

Eighteen-parva classification	*100-parva classification*	*Number of adhyayas*	*Number of shlokas*
(11) Stri	80) Vishoka	8	177
	81) Stri	17	468
	82) Shraddha	1	44
	83) Jala-pradanika	1	24
		Total = 27	Total = 713
(12) Shanti	84) Raja-dharma	128	4511
	85) Apad-dharma	39	1560
	86) Moksha-dharma	186	6935
		Total = 353	Total = 13006
(13) Anushasana	87) Dana-dharma	152	6409
	88) Bhishma-svargarohana	2	84
		Total = 154	Total = 6493
(14) Ashva-medhika	89) Ashvamedha	96	2741
(15) Ashra-mavasika	90) Ashrama-vasa	35	736
	91) Putra-darshana	9	234
	92) Naradagamana	3	91
		Total = 47	Total = 1061
(16) Mousala	93) Mousala	9	273
(17) Mahapra-sthanika	94) Mahaprasthanika	3	106
(18) Svargarohana	95) Svargarohana	5	194
Hari Vamsha	96) Hari-vamsha	45	2442
	97) Vishnu	68	3426
	98) Bhavishya	5	205
		Total = 118	Total = 6073
Grand total = 19	Grand total = 98 (95 + 3)	Grand total = 2113 (1995 + 118)	Grand total = 79,860 (73787 + 6073)

Thus, interpreted in terms of BORI's critical edition, the Mahabharata no longer possesses the 100,000 shlokas it is supposed to have. The figure is a little short of 75,000 (73,787 to be precise). Should the Hari Vamsha be included in a translation of the Mahabharata? It doesn't quite belong. Yet, it is described as a *khila* or supplement to the Mahabharata and BORI includes it as part of the critical edition, though in a separate volume. Hence, I have included the Hari Vamsha in this translation as well. With the Hari Vamsha, the number of shlokas increases to a shade less than 80,000 (79,860 to be precise). However, in some of the regional versions the text of the Mahabharata proper is closer to 85,000 shlokas and with the Hari Vamsha included, one approaches 95,000, though one doesn't quite touch 100,000.

Why should there be another translation of the Mahabharata? Surely, it must have been translated innumerable times. Contrary to popular impression, unabridged translations of the Mahabharata in English are extremely rare. One should not confuse

abridged translations with unabridged versions. There are only five unabridged translations—by Kisori Mohan Ganguly (1883–96), by Manmatha Nath Dutt (1895–1905), by the University of Chicago and J.A.B. van Buitenen (1973 onwards), by P. Lal and Writers Workshop (2005 onwards) and the Clay Sanskrit Library edition (2005 onwards). Of these, P. Lal is more a poetic trans-creation than a translation. The Clay Sanskrit Library edition is not based on the critical edition, deliberately so. In the days of Ganguly and Dutt, the critical edition didn't exist. The language in these two versions is now archaic and there are some shlokas that these two translators decided not to include, believing them to be untranslatable in that day and age. Almost three decades later, the Chicago version is still not complete, and the Clay edition, not being translated in sequence, is still in progress. However, the primary reason for venturing into yet another translation is not just the vacuum that exists, but also reason for dissatisfaction with other attempts. Stated more explicitly, this translation, I believe, is better and more authentic—but I leave it to the reader to be the final judge. (While translating 80,000 shlokas is a hazardous venture, since Ganguly, Dutt and Lal are Bengalis, surely a fourth Bengali must also be preeminently qualified to embark on this venture!)

A few comments on the translation are now in order. First, there is the vexed question of diacritical marks—should they be used or not? Diacritical marks make the translation and pronunciation more accurate, but often put readers off. Sacrificing academic purity, there is thus a conscious decision to avoid diacritical marks. Second, since diacritical marks are not being used, Sanskrit words and proper names are written in what seems to be phonetically natural and the closest—such as, Droupadi rather than Draupadi. There are rare instances where avoidance of diacritical marks can cause minor confusion, for example, between Krishna (Krishnaa) as in Droupadi[9] and Krishna as in Vaasudeva. However, such instances are extremely rare and the context should make these differences, which are mostly of the gender kind, clear. Third, there are some words that simply cannot be translated. One such word is dharma. More accurately, such words are translated the first time they occur. But on subsequent occasions, they are romanized in the text. Fourth, the translation sticks to the Sanskrit text as closely as possible. If the text uses the word Kounteya, this translation will leave it as Kounteya or Kunti's son and not attempt to replace it with Arjuna. Instead, there will be a note explaining that in that specific context Kounteya refers to Arjuna or, somewhat more rarely, Yudhishthira or Bhima. This is also the case in the structure of the English sentences. To cite an instance, if a metaphor occurs towards the beginning of the Sanskrit shloka, the English sentence attempts to retain it at the beginning too. Had this not been done, the English might have read smoother. But to the extent there is a trade-off, one has stuck to what is most accurate, rather than attempting to make the English smooth and less stilted.

As the table shows, the parvas (in the eighteen-parva classification) vary widely in length. The gigantic Aranyaka or Shanti Parva can be contrasted with the slim Mousala Parva. Breaking up the translation into separate volumes based on this eighteen-parva classification therefore doesn't work. The volumes will not be remotely similar in size. Most translators seem to keep a target of ten to twelve volumes when translating all the parvas. Assuming ten volumes, 10 per cent means roughly 200 chapters and 7000 shlokas. This works rather well for Adi Parva, but collapses thereafter. Most translators therefore have Adi Parva as the first volume and then handle the heterogeneity across the eighteen parvas in subsequent volumes. This translation approaches the break-up of volumes somewhat differently, in the sense that roughly 10 per cent of the text is covered in each volume. The complete text, as explained earlier, is roughly 200 chapters and 7,000 shlokas per volume. For example, then, this first volume has been cut off at 199 chapters and a little less than 6,500 shlokas. It includes 90 per cent of Adi Parva, but not all of it and covers the first fifteen parvas of the 100-(or 98-) parva classification.

The Mahabharata is one of the greatest stories ever told. It has plots and subplots and meanderings and digressions. It is much more than the core story of a war between the Kouravas and the Pandavas, which everyone is familiar with, the culmination of which was the battle in Kurukshetra. In the Adi Parva, there is a lot more which happens before the Kouravas and the Pandavas actually arrive on the scene. In the 100-parva classification, the Kouravas and the Pandavas don't arrive on the scene until Section 6.

From the Vedas and Vedanta literature, we know that Janamejaya and Parikshit were historical persons. From Patanjali's grammar and other contemporary texts, we know that the Mahabharata text existed by around 400 BCE. This need not of course be the final text of Mahabharata, but could have been the original text of Jaya. The Hindu eras or *yugas* are four in number—Satya (or Krita) Yuga, Treta Yuga, Dvapara Yuga and Kali Yuga. This cycle then repeats itself, with another Satya Yuga following Kali Yuga. The events of the Ramayana occurred in Treta Yuga. The events of the Mahabharata occurred in Dvapara Yuga. This is in line with Rama being Vishnu's seventh incarnation and Krishna being the eighth. (The ninth is Buddha and the tenth is Kalki.) We are now in Kali Yuga. Kali Yuga didn't begin with the Kurukshetra war. It began with Krishna's death, an event that occurred thirty-six years after the Kurukshetra war. Astronomical data do exist in the epic. These can be used to date the Kurukshetra war, or the advent of Kali Yuga. However, if the text was composed at different points in time, with additions and interpolations, internal consistency in astronomical data is unlikely. In popular belief, following two alternative astronomers, the Kurukshetra war has been

dated to 3102 BCE (following Aryabhatta) and 2449 BCE (following Varahamihira). This doesn't mesh with the timelines of Indian history. Mahapadma Nanda ascended the throne in 382 BCE, a historical fact on which there is no dispute. The Puranas have genealogical lists. Some of these state that 1050 years elapsed between Parikshit's birth and Mahapadma Nanda's ascension. Others state that 1015 years elapsed. (When numerals are written in words, it is easy to confuse 15 with 50.) This takes Parikshit's birth and the Kurukshetra war to around 1400 BCE. This is probably the best we can do, since we also know that the Kuru kingdom flourished between 1200 BCE and 800 BCE. To keep the record straight, archaeological material has been used to bring forward the date of the Kurukshetra war to around 900 BCE, the period of the Iron Age.

As was mentioned, in popular belief, the incidents of the Ramayana took place before the incidents of the Mahabharata. The Ramayana story also figures in the Mahabharata. However, there is no reference to any significant Mahabharata detail in the Ramayana. Nevertheless, from reading the text, one gets the sense that the Mahabharata represents a more primitive society than the Ramayana. The fighting in the Ramayana is more genteel and civilized. You don't have people hurling rocks and stones at each other, or fighting with trees and bare arms. Nor do people rip apart the enemy's chest and drink blood. The geographical knowledge in the Mahabharata is also more limited than in the Ramayana, both towards the east and towards the south. In popular belief, the Kurukshetra war occurred as a result of a dispute over land and the kingdom. That is true, in so far as the present text is concerned. However, another fight over cattle took place in the Virata Parva and the Pandavas were victorious in that too. This is not the place to expand on the argument. But it is possible to construct a plausible hypothesis that this was the core dispute. Everything else was added as later embellishments. The property dispute was over cattle and not land. In human evolution, cattle represents a more primitive form of property than land. In that stage, humankind is still partly nomadic and not completely settled. If this hypothesis is true, the Mahabharata again represents an earlier period compared to the Ramayana. This leads to the following kind of proposition. In its final form, the Mahabharata was indeed composed after the Ramayana. But the earliest version of the Mahabharata was composed before the earliest version of the Ramayana. And the events of the Mahabharata occurred before the events of the Ramayana, despite popular belief. The proposition about the feud ending with Virata Parva illustrates the endless speculation that is possible with the Mahabharata material. Did Arjuna, Nakula and Sahadeva ever exist? Nakula and Sahadeva have limited roles to play in the story. Arjuna's induction could have been an attempt to assert Indra's supremacy. Arjuna represents such an integral strand in the story (and of the Bhagavad Gita), that such a suggestion is likely to be dismissed out of hand. But consider the following. Droupadi loved Arjuna a little bit more than the others. That's the reason she was denied admission to heaven. Throughout the text, there

are innumerable instances where Droupadi faces difficulties. Does she ever summon Arjuna for help on such occasions? No, she does not. She summons Bhima. Therefore, did Arjuna exist at all? Or were there simply two original Pandava brothers—one powerful and strong, and the other weak and useless in physical terms. Incidentally, the eighteen-parva classification is clearly something that was done much later. The 100-parva classification seems to be older.

The Mahabharata is much more real than the Ramayana. And, therefore, much more fascinating. Every conceivable human emotion figures in it, which is the reason why it is possible to identify with it even today. The text itself states that what is not found in the Mahabharata, will not be found anywhere else. Unlike the Ramayana, India is littered with real places that have identifications with the Mahabharata. (Ayodhya or Lanka or Chitrakuta are identifications that are less certain.) Kurukshetra, Hastinapura, Indraprastha, Karnal, Mathura, Dvaraka, Gurgaon, Girivraja are real places: the list is endless. In all kinds of unlikely places, one comes across temples erected by the Pandavas when they were exiled to the forest. In some of these places, archaeological excavations have substantiated the stories. The war for regional supremacy in the Ganga–Yamuna belt is also a plausible one. The Vrishnis and the Shurasenas (the Yadavas) are isolated, they have no clear alliance (before the Pandavas) with the powerful Kurus. There is the powerful Magadha kingdom under Jarasandha and Jarasandha had made life difficult for the Yadavas. He chased them away from Mathura to Dvaraka. Shishupala of the Chedi kingdom doesn't like Krishna and the Yadavas either. Through Kunti, Krishna has a matrimonial alliance with the Pandavas. Through Subhadra, the Yadavas have another matrimonial alliance with the Pandavas. Through another matrimonial alliance, the Pandavas obtain Drupada of Panchala as an ally. In the course of the royal sacrifice, Shishupala and Jarasandha are eliminated. Finally, there is yet another matrimonial alliance with Virata of the Matsya kingdom, through Abhimanyu. When the two sides face each other on the field of battle, they are more than evenly matched. Other than the Yadavas, the Pandavas have Panchala, Kashi, Magadha, Matsya and Chedi on their side. The Kouravas have Pragjyotisha, Anga, Kekaya, Sindhu, Avanti, Gandhara, Shalva, Bahlika and Kamboja as allies. At the end of the war, all these kings are slain and the entire geographical expanse comes under the control of the Pandavas and the Yadavas. Only Kripacharya, Ashvatthama and Kritavarma survive on the Kourava side.

Reading the Mahabharata, one forms the impression that it is based on some real incidents. That does not mean that a war on the scale that is described took place. Or that miraculous weapons and chariots were the norm. But there is such a lot of trivia, unconnected with the main story, that their inclusion seems to serve no purpose unless they were true depictions. For instance, what does the physical description of Kripa's sister and Drona's wife, Kripi, have to do with the main story? It is also more real than

the Ramayana because nothing, especially the treatment of human emotions and behaviour, exists in black and white. Everything is in shades of grey. The Uttara Kanda of the Ramayana is believed to have been a later interpolation. If one excludes the Uttara Kanda, we generally know what is good. We know who is good. We know what is bad. We know who is bad. The Ramayana is like a clichéd Bollywood film. This is never the case with the Mahabharata. However, a qualification is necessary. Most of us are aware of the Mahabharata story because we have read some version or the other, typically an abridged one. Every abridged version simplifies and condenses, distills out the core story. And in doing that, it tends to paint things in black and white, fitting everything into the mould of good and bad. The Kouravas are bad. The Pandavas are good. And good eventually triumphs. The unabridged Mahabharata is anything but that. It is much more nuanced. Duryodhana isn't invariably bad. He is referred to as Suyodhana as well, and not just by his father. History is always written from the point of view of the victors. While the Mahabharata is generally laudatory towards the Pandavas, there are several places where the text has a pro-Kourava stance. There are several places where the text has an anti-Krishna stance. That's yet another reason why one should read an unabridged version, so as not to miss out on these nuances. Take the simple point about inheritance of the kingdom. Dhritarashtra was blind. Consequently, the king was Pandu. On Pandu's death, who should inherit the kingdom? Yudhishthira was the eldest among the brothers. (Actually, Karna was, though it didn't become known until later.) We thus tend to assume that the kingdom was Yudhishthira's by right, because he was the eldest. (The division of the kingdom into two, Hastinapura and Indraprastha, is a separate matter.) But such primogeniture was not universally clear. A case can also be established for Duryodhana, because he was Dhritarashtra's son. If primogeniture was the rule, the eldest son of the Pandavas was Ghatotkacha, not Abhimanyu. Before both were killed, Ghatotkacha should have had a claim to the throne. However, there is no such suggestion anywhere. The argument that Ghatotkacha was the son of a rakshasa or demon will not wash. He never exhibited any demonic qualities and was a dutiful and loving son. Karna saved up a weapon for Arjuna and this was eventually used to kill Ghatotkacha. At that time, we have the unseemly sight of Krishna dancing around in glee at Ghatotkacha being killed.

In the Mahabharata, because it is nuanced, we never quite know what is good and what is bad, who is good and who is bad. Yes, there are degrees along a continuum. But there are no watertight and neat compartments. The four objectives of human existence are dharma, artha, kama and moksha. Etymologically, dharma is that which upholds. If one goes by the Bhagavad Gita, pursuit of these four are also transient diversions. Because the fundamental objective is to transcend these four, even moksha. Within these four, the Mahabharata is about a conflict of dharma. Dharma has been reduced to *varnashrama* dharma, according to the four classes (*varnas*) and four stages of life

(*ashramas*). However, these are collective interpretations of dharma, in the sense that a Kshatriya in the *garhasthya* (householder) stage has certain duties. Dharma in the Mahabharata is individual too. Given an identical situation, a Kshatriya in the garhasthya stage might adopt a course of action that is different from that adopted by another Kshatriya in the garhasthya stage, and who is to judge what is wrong and what is right? Bhishma adopted a life of celibacy. So did Arjuna, for a limited period. In that stage of celibacy, both were approached by women who had fallen in love with them. And if those desires were not satisfied, the respective women would face difficulties, even death. Bhishma spurned the advance, but Arjuna accepted it. The conflict over dharma is not only the law versus morality conflict made famous by Krishna and Arjuna in the Bhagavad Gita. It pervades the Mahabharata, in terms of a conflict over two different notions of dharma. Having collectively married Droupadi, the Pandavas have agreed that when one of them is closeted with Droupadi, the other four will not intrude. And if there is such an instance of intrusion, they will go into self-exile. Along comes a Brahmana whose cattle have been stolen by thieves. Arjuna's weapons are in the room where Droupadi and Yudhishthira are. Which is the higher dharma? Providing succour to the Brahmana or adhering to the oath? Throughout the Mahabharata, we have such conflicts, with no clear normative indications of what is wrong and what is right, because there are indeed no absolute answers. Depending on one's decisions, one faces the consequences and this brings in the unsolvable riddle of the tension between free will and determinism, the so-called karma concept. The boundaries of philosophy and religion blur.

These conflicts over dharma are easy to identify with. It is easy to empathize with the protagonists, because we face such conflicts every day. That is precisely the reason why the Mahabharata is read even today. And the reason one says every conceivable human emotion figures in the story. Everyone familiar with the Mahabharata has thought about the decisions taken and about the characters. Why was life so unfair to Karna? Why was Krishna partial to the Pandavas? Why didn't he prevent the war? Why was Abhimanyu killed so unfairly? Why did the spirited and dark Droupadi, so unlike the Sita of the Ramayana, have to be humiliated publicly?

It is impossible to pinpoint when and how my interest in the Mahabharata started. As a mere toddler, my maternal grandmother used to tell me stories from *Chandi*, part of the Markandeya Purana. I still vividly recollect pictures from her copy of *Chandi*: Kali licking the demon Raktavija's blood. Much later, in my early teens, at school in Ramakrishna Mission, Narendrapur, I first read the Bhagavad Gita, without understanding much of what I read. The alliteration and poetry in the first chapter was

attractive enough for me to learn it by heart. Perhaps the seeds were sown there. In my late teens, I stumbled upon Bankimchandra Chattopadhyay's *Krishna Charitra*, written in 1886. Bankimchandra was not only a famous novelist, he was a brilliant essayist. For a long time, *Krishna Charitra* was not available other than in Bengali. It has now been translated into English, but deserves better dissemination. A little later, when in college, I encountered Buddhadeb Bose's *Mahabharater Katha*. That was another brilliant collection of essays, first serialized in a magazine and then published as a book in 1974. This too was originally in Bengali, but is now available in English. Unlike my sons, my first exposure to the Mahabharata story came not through television serials but comic books. Upendrakishore Raychowdhury's Mahabharata (and Ramayana) for children was staple diet, later supplanted by Rajshekhar Basu's abridged versions of both epics, written for adults. Both were in Bengali. In English, there was Chakravarti Rajagopalachari's abridged translation, still a perennial favourite. Later, Chakravarthi Narasimhan's selective unabridged translation gave a flavour of what the Mahabharata actually contained. In Bengal, the Kashiram Das version of the Mahabharata, written in the seventeenth century, was quite popular. I never found this appealing. But in the late 1970s, I stumbled upon a treasure. Kolkata's famous College Street was a storehouse of old and second-hand books in those days. You never knew what you would discover when browsing. In the nineteenth century, an unabridged translation of the Mahabharata had been done in Bengali under the editorship of Kaliprasanna Singha (1840–70). I picked this up for the princely sum of Rs 5. The year may have been 1979, but Rs 5 was still amazing. This was my first complete reading of the unabridged version of the Mahabharata. This particular copy probably had antiquarian value. The pages would crumble in my hands and I soon replaced my treasured possession with a republished reprint. Not longer after, I acquired the Aryashastra version of the Mahabharata, with both the Sanskrit and the Bengali together. In the early 1980s, I was also exposed to three Marathi writers writing on the Mahabharata. There was Iravati Karve's *Yuganta*. This was available in both English and in Marathi. I read the English one first, followed by the Marathi. The English version isn't an exact translation of the Marathi and the Marathi version is far superior. Then there was Durga Bhagwat's *Vyas Parva*. This was in Marathi and I am not aware of an English translation. Finally, there was Shivaji Sawant's *Mritunjaya*, a kind of autobiography for Karna. This was available both in English and in Marathi.

In the early 1980s, quite by chance, I encountered two shlokas, one from Valmiki's Ramayana, the other from Kalidasa's *Meghadutam*. These were two poets separated by anything between 500 to 1,000 years, the exact period being an uncertain one. The shloka in *Meghadutam* is right towards the beginning, the second shloka to be precise. It is the first day in the month of Ashada. The yaksha has been cursed and has been separated from his beloved. The mountains are covered with clouds. These clouds are

like elephants, bent down as if in play. The shloka in the Valmiki Ramayana occurs in Sundara Kanda. Rama now knows that Sita is in Lanka. But the monsoon stands in the way of the invasion. The clouds are streaked with flags of lightning and garlanded with geese. They are like mountain peaks and are thundering, like elephants fighting. At that time, I did not know that elephants were a standard metaphor for clouds in Sanskrit literature. I found it amazing that two different poets separated by time had thought of elephants. And because the yaksha was pining for his beloved, the elephants were playing. But because Rama was impatient to fight, the elephants were fighting. I resolved that I must read all this in the original. It was a resolution I have never regretted. I think that anyone who has not read *Meghadutam* in Sanskrit has missed out on a thing of beauty that will continue to be a joy for generations to come.

In the early 1980s, Professor Ashok Rudra was a professor of economics in Visva-Bharati, Santiniketan. I used to teach in Presidency College, Kolkata, and we sometimes met. Professor Rudra was a left-wing economist and didn't think much of my economics. I dare say the feeling was reciprocated. By tacit agreement, we never discussed economics. Instead, we discussed Indological subjects. At that point, Professor Rudra used to write essays on such subjects in Bengali. I casually remarked, 'I want to do a statistical test on the frequency with which the five Pandavas used various weapons in the Kurukshetra war.' Most sensible men would have dismissed the thought as crazy. But Professor Rudra wasn't sensible by usual norms of behaviour and he was also a trained statistician. He encouraged me to do the paper, written and published in Bengali, using the Aryashastra edition. Several similar papers followed, written in Bengali. In 1983, I moved to Pune, to the Gokhale Institute of Politics and Economics, a stone's throw away from BORI. *Annals of the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute* (*ABORI*) is one of the most respected journals in Indology. Professor G.B. Palsule was then the editor of *ABORI* and later went on to become Director of BORI. I translated one of the Bengali essays into English and went and met Professor Palsule, hoping to get it published in *ABORI*. To Professor Palsule's eternal credit, he didn't throw the dilettante out. Instead, he said he would get the paper refereed. The referee's substantive criticism was that the paper should have been based on the critical edition, which is how I came to know about it. Eventually, this paper (and a few more) were published in *ABORI*. In 1989, these became a book titled *Essays on the Ramayana and the Mahabharata*, published when the Mahabharata frenzy had reached a peak on television. The book got excellent reviews, but hardly sold. It is now out of print. As an aside, the book was jointly dedicated to Professor Rudra and Professor Palsule, a famous economist and a famous Indologist respectively. Both were flattered. However, when I gave him a copy, Professor Rudra said, 'Thank you very much. But who is Professor Palsule?' And Professor Palsule remarked, 'Thank you very much. But who is Professor Rudra?'

While the research interest in the Mahabharata remained, I got sidetracked into

translating. Through the 1990s, there were abridged translations of the Maha Puranas, the Vedas and the eleven major Upanishads. I found that I enjoyed translating from the Sanskrit to English and since these volumes were well received, perhaps I did do a good job. With Penguin as publisher, I did a translation of the Bhagavad Gita, something I had always wanted to do. *Sarama and Her Children*, a book on attitudes towards dogs in India, also with Penguin, followed. I kept thinking about doing an unabridged translation of the Mahabharata and waited to muster up the courage. That courage now exists, though the task is daunting. With something like two million words and ten volumes expected, the exercise seems open-ended. But why translate the Mahabharata? In 1924, George Mallory, with his fellow climber Andrew Irvine, may or may not have climbed Mount Everest. They were last seen a few hundred metres from the summit, before they died. Mallory was once asked why he wanted to climb Everest and he answered, 'Because it's there.' Taken out of context, there is no better reason for wanting to translate the Mahabharata. There is a steep mountain to climb. And I would not have dared had I not been able to stand of the shoulders of the three intellectual giants who have preceded me—Kisori Mohan Ganguli, Manmatha Nath Dutt and J.A.B. van Buitenen.

Bibek Debroy

The third volume completes the Vana Parva, the account of the Pandavas' sojourn in the forest. It details the dharma obtained from, and descriptions of, places of pilgrimage. It recounts the stories of Agastya, Rishyashringa, Kartavirya, Sukanya and Chyavana, Mandhata, Jantu, Shibi, Ashtavakra, Yavakrita, Jatasura, and Markandeya. The narrative covers Arjuna's slaying of the nivatakavacha demons; the Kouravas' defeat at the hands of the gandharvas and their subsequent release by the Pandavas; Droupadi's abduction by Jayadratha and rescue by the Pandavas; and Indra's visit to Karna to rob him of his earrings and armour.

Section Thirty-Three

Tirtha-yatra Parva

This parva has 2294 shlokas and seventy-four chapters.

Chapter 377(80): 133 shlokas
Chapter 378(81): 178 shlokas
Chapter 379(82): 143 shlokas
Chapter 380(83): 114 shlokas
Chapter 381(84): 19 shlokas
Chapter 382(85): 23 shlokas
Chapter 383(86): 24 shlokas
Chapter 384(87): 15 shlokas
Chapter 385(88): 30 shlokas
Chapter 386(89): 22 shlokas
Chapter 387(90): 24 shlokas
Chapter 388(91): 28 shlokas
Chapter 389(92): 22 shlokas
Chapter 390(93): 27 shlokas
Chapter 391(94): 27 shlokas
Chapter 392(95): 24 shlokas
Chapter 393(96): 20 shlokas
Chapter 394(97): 27 shlokas
Chapter 395(98): 24 shlokas
Chapter 396(99): 21 shlokas
Chapter 397(100): 24 shlokas
Chapter 398(101): 17 shlokas
Chapter 399(102): 23 shlokas
Chapter 400(103): 19 shlokas
Chapter 401(104): 22 shlokas
Chapter 402(105): 25 shlokas
Chapter 403(106): 40 shlokas
Chapter 404(107): 25 shlokas
Chapter 405(108): 19 shlokas
Chapter 406(109): 20 shlokas
Chapter 407(110): 36 shlokas
Chapter 408(111): 22 shlokas
Chapter 409(112): 18 shlokas
Chapter 410(113): 25 shlokas
Chapter 411(114): 26 shlokas
Chapter 412(115): 30 shlokas
Chapter 413(116): 29 shlokas
Chapter 414(117): 18 shlokas
Chapter 415(118): 23 shlokas
Chapter 416(119): 22 shlokas
Chapter 417(120): 30 shlokas
Chapter 418(121): 23 shlokas
Chapter 419(122): 27 shlokas
Chapter 420(123): 23 shlokas

Chapter 421(124): 24 shlokas
Chapter 422(125): 23 shlokas
Chapter 423(126): 43 shlokas
Chapter 424(127): 21 shlokas
Chapter 425(128): 19 shlokas
Chapter 426(129): 22 shlokas
Chapter 427(130): 20 shlokas
Chapter 428(131): 32 shlokas
Chapter 429(132): 20 shlokas
Chapter 430(133): 27 shlokas
Chapter 431(134): 39 shlokas
Chapter 432(135): 42 shlokas
Chapter 433(136): 18 shlokas
Chapter 434(137): 20 shlokas
Chapter 435(138): 19 shlokas
Chapter 436(139): 24 shlokas
Chapter 437(140): 17 shlokas
Chapter 438(141): 30 shlokas
Chapter 439(142): 28 shlokas
Chapter 440(143): 21 shlokas
Chapter 441(144): 27 shlokas
Chapter 442(145): 43 shlokas
Chapter 443(146): 81 shlokas
Chapter 444(147): 41 shlokas
Chapter 445(148): 39 shlokas
Chapter 446(149): 52 shlokas
Chapter 447(150): 28 shlokas
Chapter 448(151): 15 shlokas
Chapter 449(152): 25 shlokas
Chapter 450(153): 31 shlokas

The chapters have two numbers, the first being the sequential numbering of the chapters right from the beginning. The second one, the number within brackets, is the sequential numbering of the chapters within Aranyaka Parva.

Tirtha *means a sacred place of pilgrimage and yatra means a journey. This section is thus primarily about the journey to sacred places of pilgrimage like Pushkara, Prabhasa, Dvaravati, Vinasana, Rudrakoti, Kurukshetra, Mrigadhuma, Naimisha, Saptasarasvata, Prithudaka, Samnihiti, Shakambhari, Suvarnaksha, Varanasi, Gaya, Shalagrama, Rishabha, Gokarna, Prayaga, Gandhamadana and Kailasa. It also has the stories of Agastya, Indra and Vritra, Sagara and Bhagiratha, Rishyashringa, Parashurama and Kartyavirya, Chyavana and Sukanya, Mandhata, Jantu, Shibi Ushinara, Ashtavakra, Yavakrita and the account of the encounter between Hanuman and Bhima.*

377(80)

Vaishampayana said, 'Anxious on Dhananjaya's account, the immensely fortunate and *maharatha*[1] Pandavas lived in the forest with Droupadi. Then they saw there the great-souled *devarshi*[2] Narada. He was radiant with the resplendence of the *brahman*[3] and his energy was like that of the blazing fire. The supreme one among the Kurus[4] was surrounded by his illustrious brothers and shone brilliantly, like Shatakratu[5] surrounded by the gods. Just as *savitri*[6] does not forsake the Vedas and the sun's rays do not forsake

Meru,[7] the faithful Yajnaseni[8] followed dharma and did not abandon the Parthas.[9] O unblemished one![10] The illustrious *rishi*[11] Narada accepted their homage and appropriately comforted Dharma's son.[12] He spoke these words to great-souled Dharmaraja[13] Yudhishthira. "O supreme among those who uphold dharma! Tell me what will accomplish your purpose. What will I give you?" Then Dharma's son, the king, bowed in obeisance with his brothers, and with hands joined in salutation, told the divine Narada, "O immensely fortunate one! O one who is worshipped by all the worlds! O one whose vows are great! If you are satisfied, I think everything has been accomplished through your grace. O unblemished one! O supreme among sages! But if you wish to show a favour to me and my brothers, please dispel a doubt that has arisen in my heart. Tell me what merits are obtained by someone who circles the earth[14] and visits all the tirthas? O brahmana! Please tell me this in detail."

'Narada replied, "O king! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Listen attentively to what Bhishma heard from Pulastya.[15] Hear it in detail. In earlier times, Bhishma, supreme among those who uphold dharma, was observing a vow for his father[16] on the banks of the Bhagirathi,[17] like a hermit. O great king! This was a pure and sacred region and was frequented by the devarshis. The immensely energetic one was at the mouth of the Ganga, in a place frequented by gods and *gandharvas*.[18] The immensely radiant one made offerings to the ancestors and the gods and satisfied the rishis in accordance with the prescribed rituals. After some time, when the immensely famous one was meditating, he saw the supreme rishi Pulastya, whose appearance was extraordinary. On seeing that terrible ascetic, blazing in fortune, he was extremely delighted and overcome by wonder. O great king! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Bhishma, best among those who uphold dharma, worshipped him in accordance with the prescribed rituals. He purified himself and concentrated his mind. He placed the *arghya*[19] on his head and announced his name to the supreme among brahmarshis. 'O fortunate one whose vows are great! I am your slave Bhishma. At the mere sight of you, I have been cleansed of all my sins.' O great king! O Yudhishthira! Having said this, Bhishma, supreme among those who uphold dharma, became silent and controlled his speech. He joined his hands in salutation. On seeing that Bhishma, best among those of the Kuru lineage, had become emaciated because of the rituals and the studying, the sage was pleased in his mind.

'"Pulastya said, 'O one who is knowledgeable about dharma! O immensely fortunate one! I am entirely satisfied with your humility, self-control and devotion to the truth. O unblemished one! O son! It is because of your dharma and because of your devotion to your father that you have been able to see me. I am extremely pleased with you. O Bhishma! My vision is unrestricted. Tell me what I can do for you. O best of the Kurus! O

unblemished one! I will give you whatever you ask for.'

'"Bhishma replied, 'O immensely fortunate one! O one who is worshipped by all the worlds! O lord! If you are pleased with me and I have been able to see you, I think that all my tasks have been accomplished. O supreme among those who uphold dharma! If I have obtained your favour, I will tell you about a doubt in my heart. Please dispel it. O illustrious one! A doubt exists about the dharma that comes from the tirthas. I wish to hear about this from you, separately for each of them. Please tell me. O brahmana rishi! O infinitely valorous one! O one blessed with the riches of austerities! Tell me what merits are obtained by circling the earth.'

'"Pulastya said, 'O son! Listen to me with an attentive mind. I will recount to you the fruits from the tirthas, the ultimate goal of all the rishis. He who has controlled his hands, feet and mind and he who has learning, asceticism and deeds, obtains the fruits of the tirthas. He who is satisfied, controlled and pure, does not receive gifts[20] and has restrained his ego, obtains the fruits of the tirthas. He who is without deceit, without undertakings,[21] eats lightly, controls his senses and is freed from all sins, obtains the fruits of the tirthas. O Indra among kings! He who is without anger, truthful in conduct and firm in his vows and who regards all beings as his own self, obtains the fruits of the tirthas. In due order, the rishis have recounted in the Vedas all the fruits from sacrifices, exactly as they occur, in this life and the afterlife. O lord of the earth! The poor cannot perform these sacrifices. Sacrifices require many objects and a lot of ingredients in large quantities. Kings can attain them and so can some rich men. They cannot be attained by those without riches, without objects, without means and those who are alone. O lord of men! But listen to what the poor can obtain, the supreme equal of the fruits of sacred sacrifices. O supreme among those of the Bharata lineage! This is the supreme mystery of the rishis, the pure merit from visiting tirthas, superior even to sacrifices. He who has not fasted for three nights, not visited tirthas and not donated gold and cattle, is known as poor. The fruits obtained from *agnishtoma*[22] and other sacrifices, with large quantities of donations, are inferior to those obtained from visiting tirthas.'

'"There is in the world of men a tirtha of the god of the gods. It is famous in the three worlds and is known by the name of Pushkara.[23] Those who are immensely fortunate go there. O lord of the earth! At the time of the three *sandhyas*,[24] ten thousand crores of tirthas can be found in Pushkara. O lord! Adityas,[25] Vasus,[26] Rudras,[27] the Sadhyas,[28] with the Maruts[29] and gandharvas and *apsaras*[30] are always present there. O great king! It was there that the gods, demons and brahmarshis performed austerities and attained great merits and celestial *yoga*.[31] Even if one only desires Pushkara in one's mind, all the sins of that intelligent one are cleansed and he is revered in the vault of heaven. The immensely fortunate grandfather[32] always dwells there, happily

worshipped by the gods and the demons. O immensely fortunate one! It was in Pushkara that the gods, with the rishis at the forefront, attained salvation and great merits. The learned ones say that he who bathes there and worships the gods and the ancestors, obtains ten times the merits of an *ashvamedha.*[33] O Bhishma! He who goes to Pushkara forest and feeds only a single brahmana, obtains through that deed happiness in this life and the afterlife. If he himself survives on vegetables, roots and fruits and faithfully and respectfully offers that to a brahmana, that wise man obtains the fruits of a horse sacrifice. O supreme among kings! Great-souled brahmanas, kshatriyas, vaishyas and shudras who bathe in this tirtha are not reborn as inferior species. O bull among the Bharata lineage! A man who specially goes to Pushkara at the time of the full moon in the month of Kartika extends his merits and they become inexhaustible. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! He who joins his hands in salutation and remembers Pushkara in the morning and the evening attains the fruits of bathing in all the tirthas. That man obtains Brahma's eternal world, without decay. Whatever sins a woman or a man has committed since birth are all instantly destroyed from bathing in Pushkara. O king! Just as Madhusudana[34] is the origin of all the gods, Pushkara is known as the origin of all the tirthas. He who lives constantly and purely in Pushkara for twelve years obtains all the sacrifices[35] and attains Brahma's world. He who performs *agnihotra*[36] for one hundred years and he who lives in Pushkara on the night of the full moon in Kartika are like equals. It is difficult to go to Pushkara. It is difficult to perform austerities in Pushkara. It is difficult to donate in Pushkara. It is extremely difficult to live there.

'"Having lived in Pushkara for twelve nights, restrained and with a controlled diet, one should circumambulate it and go to Jambumarga.[37] Jambumarga is frequented by the gods, the rishis and the ancestors and once one has entered, one obtains the fruits of a horse sacrifice and goes to Vishnu's world. A man who lives there for five nights and eats once in three days never confronts calamity and achieves supreme success. Having left Jambumarga, one goes to Tandulikashrama and never confronts calamity, being worshipped in heaven. O king! He who goes to Agastya's[38] lake and engages himself in worshipping the ancestors and the gods, residing there for three nights, obtains the merits of an agnishtoma.[39] He lives there on vegetables and fruits and obtains the supreme abode of Kumara.[40] He then reaches Kanva's[41] hermitage, full of prosperity and worshipped in the world. O bull among the Bharata lineage! From the beginning, that has been a sacred forest, full of dharma. As soon as one enters there, one is freed from all sins. He who restrains himself and controls his diet there, worshipping the ancestors and the gods, obtains all the objects of desire and the fruits of all sacrifices. Having circumambulated it, one should go to the place where Yayati fell.[42] This gives one the merits from a horse sacrifice. Restrained and controlled in diet, one should then

go to Mahakala.[43] Having bathed in Kotitirtha,[44] one obtains the fruits of a horse sacrifice. One who is learned in dharma should then go to the sacred place of Uma's consort.[45] This is famous in the three worlds by the name of Bhadravata.[46] Having gone there and seen Ishana,[47] he obtains the fruits of donating one thousand cows. Through Mahadeva's[48] grace, he obtains the status of a *ganapatya.*[49]

'"One then goes on to the river named Narmada, famous in the three worlds. Having offered oblations to the ancestors and the gods, one obtains the fruits of agnishtoma. The *brahmachari*[50] who is in control of his senses goes on to the southern waters, attains agnishtoma[51] and ascends a celestial chariot. Controlling himself and controlling his diet, he then goes to Charmanvati,[52] and obtaining Rantideva's permission, attains the fruits of agnishtoma. O Yudhishthira![53] O one learned in dharma! He then goes on to Arbuda, the son of the Himalayas. In earlier times, there used to be a hole in the earth here.[54] Vasishtha's hermitage, famous in the three worlds, is there. He who spends a single night there, obtains the fruits of one thousand cows.[55] O tiger among men! As a brahmachari in control of one's senses, one should bathe in Pingatirtha and obtain the fruits from one hundred tawny cows.[56] O one learned in dharma! One then goes to Prabhasa, famous in the worlds.[57] The fire-god is himself always present there. The brave Anala[58] is the mouth of the gods and has the wind for his chariot. A man who bathes in that supreme tirtha, pure and restrained in mind, obtains the fruits of both agnishtoma and *atiratra.*[59] One then goes to the place where Sarasvati unites with the ocean. O bull among the Bharata lineage! He obtains the fruits of one thousand cows[60] and attains the world of heaven, blazing in resplendence like the fire. One should stay there for three nights and offer oblations to the ancestors and the gods. One then shines like the moon and attains ashvamedha.[61] O supreme among the Bharata lineage! One then goes to the tirtha where a boon was granted. O Yudhishthira![62] Durvasa granted a boon to Vishnu there. A man who bathes where the boon was granted obtains the fruits of one thousand cows.[63] Then, restrained and controlled in one's diet, one goes to Dvaravati. A man who bathes in Pindaraka[64] obtains a lot of gold. O immensely fortunate one! O destroyer of enemies! O descendant of the Kuru lineage! It is extraordinary that in that tirtha,[65] even today, coins can be seen, marked with the signs of the lotus and signs of the trident. O bull among the Bharata lineage! Mahadeva is always present there.

'"O descendant of the Bharata lineage! One goes on to where the Sindhu[66] unites with the ocean. With a restrained mind, one bathes in the waters of that king among tirthas. O bull among the Bharata lineage! One offers oblations to the ancestors, the gods and

the sages. One obtains the world of Varuna and becomes resplendent in one's own energy. O Yudhishthira![67] The wise ones say that by worshipping the god who is the lord of Shankukarna, one obtains ten times an ashamedha.[68] O bull among the Bharata lineage! O supreme among the best of the Kuru lineage! After circumambulating it, one goes to the tirtha that is famous in the three worlds. This is renowned by the name of Drimi and is the cleanser of all sins. It is there that Brahma and the other gods worshipped Maheshvara.[69] A man who bathes there and worships Rudra, surrounded by the masses of the gods, removes all the sins he has committed since birth. It was there that Drimi, supreme among men, was honoured by all the gods. O best of men! Bathing there, one obtains a horse sacrifice.[70] O immensely intelligent one! O king! In earlier times, it was there that the lord Vishnu purified himself after slaying the thorns of the gods.[71] O one learned in dharma! One should then go to Vasudhara, universally worshipped. From merely going there, one obtains a horse sacrifice.[72] O best among the supreme of the Kurus! By bathing there, controlling his soul and worshipping the gods and the ancestors, one is glorified in Vishnu's world. O bull among the Bharata lineage! In that tirtha, there is a sacred lake of the Vasus. Bathing there and drinking its water, one is favoured by the Vasus. O best of men! There is the famous Sindhuttama, the cleanser of all sins. Bathing there, one obtains a lot of gold. Having gone to Brahmatunga, pure and controlled in mind, a man who performs good deeds without any passion, attains the world of Brahma. There is Shakra's[73] tirtha named Kumarika, frequented by the *siddhas*.[74] Having bathed there, a man swiftly attains Shakra's world. There is another tirtha named Renuka there, frequented by the gods. On bathing there, a brahmana becomes as unblemished as the moon.

'"Controlled and restrained in diet, one should then go to Panchanada.[75] As has been extolled, in due order, one obtains the five sacrifices.[76] O one learned in dharma! One then goes to the supreme place known as Bhimasthana.[77] O supreme among the Bharata lineage! O king! Bathing in Yoni,[78] a man becomes the son of a goddess and has a body adorned with golden earrings. He obtains the fruits of one hundred thousand cows.[79] Going to Girimunja and worshipping the grandfather,[80] one obtains the fruits of a thousand cows.[81] O one learned in dharma! Then one goes to the supreme tirtha known as Vimala.[82] Even today, golden and silver fish can be seen there. O best of men! Having bathed there, one obtains a horse sacrifice.[83] Cleansed of all sins and pure in soul, one attains the supreme goal. Then one should go to Malada, famous in the three worlds. At the time of the western[84] sandhya, one should perform ablutions in the ritual fashion. One should then offer *charu*[85] to the seven-flamed fire in accordance with

one's powers. The learned say that such offerings to the ancestors become inexhaustible. Charu offered to the seven-flamed fire is superior to a hundred thousand cows,[86] a hundred royal sacrifices and one thousand horse sacrifices. O Indra among men! From there, one should specifically go to Vastrapada. Having gone to Mahadeva there, one obtains the fruits of a horse sacrifice. O king! One then goes to Manimat. Practising brahmacharya, controlling one's mind and living there for one night, one obtains the fruits of agnishtoma.

'"O Indra among kings! O bull among the Bharata lineage! Then one should go to Devika,[87] famous in the world. It has been heard that brahmanas were created there. This is the place of the wielder of the trident, famous in the three worlds.[88] O bull among the Bharata lineage! Bathing in Devika and worshipping Maheshvara, and offering charu in accordance with one's capacity, a man obtains the fruits of a sacrifice that yields all desires. Rudra's tirtha Kamakhya,[89] frequented by the divine sages, is also there. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Having bathed there, a man swiftly obtains success. Moving on to Yajana, Yajana[90] and Brahmavaluka and touching the waters of Pushpam, one overcomes sorrow and death. It is said that the sacred Devika, frequented by devarshis, is five *yojanas*[91] long and half a yojana wide. O one learned in dharma! Then in due order, one should go to Dirghasatra.[92] With Brahma at the forefront, the gods, the siddhas and the supreme rishis performed a long sacrifice there, rigid in their vows and donating *dakshina*.[93] O Indra among kings! O destroyer of enemies! By going to Dirghasatra, a man obtains the fruits of a royal sacrifice and a horse sacrifice. Then, controlled and restrained in one's diet, one should go to Vinasana.[94] The Sarasvati disappeared there in the midst of the desert and could again be seen in Chamasa, Shivodbheda and Nagodbheda. Bathing in Chamasodbheda,[95] one obtains the fruits of agnishtoma. Bathing in Shivodbheda, a man obtains the fruits of one thousand cows.[96] Bathing in Nagodbheda, a man obtains the world of the nagas.[97]

'"O Indra among kings! One moves on to Shashayana,[98] a difficult tirtha to attain. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Lotuses assume the form of rabbits there for an entire year. O Indra among kings! O best of the Bharata lineage! O tiger among men! Bathing in the waters there, at the time of the full moon in the month of Kartika, one is always radiant like the moon. O bull among the Bharata lineage! One obtains the fruits of one thousand cows.[99] O descendant of the Kuru lineage! Restrained, one should go on to Kumarakoti. Having bathed there, one should worship the ancestors and the gods. Thus one obtains the fruits of infinite cows[100] and uplifts one's lineage. O one learned in dharma! Restrained in soul, one then goes to Rudrakoti. O great king! In ancient times, one crore self-controlled sages assemble there, filled with great joy and desiring

to see Rudra. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! 'I will be the first one to see Vrishadhvaja.'[101] 'I am the first to see him.' O king! It is said that thus did the sages speak. O lord of the earth! In an attempt to prevent those self-controlled sages from becoming angry, the lord of yoga[102] resorted to yoga and created one crore Rudras, one before every sage. Each one separately thought, 'I have seen him first.' O king! Having been satisfied with the terrible energy of the sages and their supreme devotion, Mahadeva granted them a boon. 'Your dharma will increase from today.' O tiger among men! A pure man who bathes in Rudrakoti obtains the fruits of a horse sacrifice and rescues his lineage. O Indra among kings! From there, one should go to the confluence of Sarasvati, famous in the world and extremely sacred.[103] O Indra among kings! There the gods, the rishis, the siddhas and the *charanas*,[104] with Brahma at the forefront, go on the fourteenth day of *shuklapaksha*[105] in the month of Chaitra and worship Janardana.[106] Having bathed there, one obtains a lot of gold, is freed from all one's sins and one's soul is purified. One goes to the world of Brahma. O lord of men! On going to Satravasana, one obtains the fruits of one thousand cows.[107] It is there that the sages completed their sacrifices."'

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'"Pulastya said, 'O Indra among kings! One should then go to the applauded Kurukshetra. All those who go there are freed from all their sins. He who always says, "I will go to Kurukshetra, I will live in Kurukshetra," is freed from sins. O Yudhishthira![108] One should live for a month on the banks of the Sarasvati. O lord of the earth! With Brahma at the forefront, the gods, the sages, the siddhas, the charanas, the gandharvas, the apsaras and the *pannagas*[109] always go to the immensely sacred Brahmakshetra.[110] O Yudhishthira![111] Even if one only wishes to go to Kurukshetra in one's mind, all one's sins are destroyed and one goes to Brahma's world. O extender of the Kuru lineage! He who goes to Kurukshetra with devotion, obtains the fruits of a royal sacrifice and a horse sacrifice. O king! Saluting the immensely strong gatekeeper, the *yaksha* Machakruka,[112] one obtains the fruits of one thousand cows.[113] O one learned in dharma! O Indra among kings! One then goes to Vishnu's supreme region. This is known as Satata and Hari is there.[114] Bathing there and worshipping Hari, the lord of the three worlds, one obtains a horse sacrifice[115] and attains Vishnu's world. One should then go to the tirtha of Pariplava, famous in the three worlds. A man[116] obtains the fruits of agnishtoma and atiratra.[117] On going to the tirtha known as Prithivi, one obtains the fruits of a thousand cows.[118] O lord of men! Going on to Shalukini and

bathing in Dashashvamedhika,[119] the visitor of tirthas obtains those fruits.[120] On going to the supreme tirtha of nagas known as Sarpadevi,[121] one obtains agnishtoma[122] and attains the world of nagas. O one learned in dharma! One should then go to the gatekeeper Tarantuka.[123] Spending one night there, one obtains the fruits of one thousand cows.[124] One should then go to Panchanada,[125] controlled and restrained in diet. Having bathed in Kotitirtha, one obtains the fruits of a horse sacrifice.[126] Going on to the tirtha known as Ashvins, one is reborn in beautiful form.

"'O one learned in dharma! One should then go to the supreme tirtha known as Varaha.[127] In earlier times, Vishnu was established there in the form of a boar. O tiger among men! On bathing there, one obtains the fruits of agnishtoma. O Indra among kings! One should then go to Somatirtha in Jayanti.[128] Bathing there, a man obtains the fruits of a royal sacrifice. Bathing in Ekahamsa, a man obtains the fruits of a thousand cows.[129] O extender of the Kuru lineage! A visitor of tirthas then goes to Kritashoucha. Such a man becomes pure and attains Pundarika.[130] Then one goes to the wise Mahadeva at Munjavata.[131] Having stayed there for one night, one attains the status of Ganapati.[132] O great king! Yakshi, famous in the world, is there. O Indra among kings! Going there, one attains the sacred worlds. O bull among the Bharata lineage! This is famous as the gate to Kurukshetra. The visitor of tirthas should control his soul and circumambulate it. Bathing in the lake there, which was created by the great-souled Jamadagnya Rama,[133] one should worship the ancestors and the gods. O king! One then becomes successful in one's endeavours and obtains a horse sacrifice.[134]

"'O lord of men! O Indra among kings! The visitor of tirthas should then go to Rama's lakes.[135] The radiant and energetic Rama destroyed the kshatriyas through his valour and created five lakes there. O tiger among men! It has been heard that he filled them with blood. Thus did he worship all his fathers and grandfathers. O lord of men! Then the ancestors were pleased and told Rama, "O Rama! O immensely fortunate Rama! O Bhargava![136] O lord! We are pleased with your devotion to your ancestors and your valour. O fortunate one! O immensely radiant one! Ask for a boon. What do you wish for?" O Indra among kings! At these words, Rama, supreme among those who can smite, joined his hands in salutation and told his ancestors who were established in the sky, "If you are pleased with me and if I have earned your favour, I wish to obtain a boon from my ancestors that I may again be satisfied through austerities. Overcome with anger, I destroyed the kshatriyas. Through your energy, may I be freed from that sin. Let these lakes become tirthas, famous on earth." Having heard Rama's pure words, the ancestors were extremely delighted and happily told Rama, "Especially because of your devotion to your ancestors, let your austerities become greater. The kshatriyas have been

destroyed by you out of wrath. But you have been freed from that sin, because it was their deeds that brought them down. There is no doubt that these lakes of yours will become tirthas. One who bathes in these lakes and worships his ancestors, will please his ancestors and they will grant him everything that his mind desires, even if it is the most difficult of objects to obtain on earth, and even the eternal world of heaven." O king! Having granted this boon, Rama's pleased ancestors showed their respects to Bhargava and disappeared instantly. It was thus that Rama's lakes, those of the great-souled Bhargava, become sacred. O Indra among kings! If one leads the life of a brahmachari, pure in vows, and bathes in Rama's lakes and worships Rama, one obtains a lot of gold.[137]

"''O extender of the Kuru lineage! O king! A visitor of tirthas should go to Vamshamulaka and save his own lineage by bathing in Vamshamulaka. O supreme among the Bharata lineage! One should then go to the tirtha known as Kayashodhana.[138] Bathing in that tirtha, there is no doubt that one can purify one's body. Having purified one's body, one goes to the supreme and sacred worlds. O Indra among kings! Then one should go to the tirtha that is famous in the three worlds. In ancient times, the powerful Vishnu rescued the worlds there. O king! Having gone to Lokoddhara[139] tirtha, famous in the three worlds, and bathing in that supreme of tirthas, one recovers[140] many worlds for one's own self. One should then go to the tirtha known as Shri[141] and obtain supreme prosperity. Composed, the brahmachari should then go to Kapila tirtha.[142] A man who bathes there and worships the gods and the ancestors, obtains the fruits of one thousand tawny cows.[143] With a controlled mind, one should then go and bathe in Surya tirtha.[144] Having worshipped the gods and the ancestors and having fasted, one attains agnishtoma[145] and goes to the world of Surya. Then, in proper order, the visitor of tirthas goes to Govambhavana.[146] Having performed one's ablutions there, one obtains the fruits of one thousand cows.[147] O extender of the Kuru lineage! The visitor of tirthas then goes to Shankhini.[148] Bathing in that tirtha of the goddess, a man obtains supreme beauty. O Indra among kings! One should then go to the gatekeeper Arantuka.[149] That tirtha of the great-souled Indra among the yakshas is on the banks of the Sarasvati. O king! Having bathed there, a man obtains the fruits of agnishtoma. O one who is learned in dharma! O lord of men! Then one should go to Brahmavarta. Bathing in Brahmavarta, a man attains Brahma's world. O one who is learned in dharma! Then one should go to the supreme Sutirtha. The ancestors are always there, together with the gods. Having performed ablutions there, devoted to the worship of the ancestors and the gods, one obtains a horse sacrifice and attains the world of the ancestors. O one learned in

dharma! In due order, one then goes to Ambuvashya. O supreme among the Bharata lineage! Bathing in the tirtha of the lord of treasures,[150] one is cleansed of all disease and attains greatness in the world of Brahma.

"''O descendant of the Bharata lineage! There is also Matri tirtha.[151] O king! On bathing there, one's offspring increase and one attains everlasting prosperity. Controlled and restrained in diet, one should then go to Shitavana tirtha.[152] O great king! There is a great thing there, rare elsewhere. O lord of men! One is sanctified in one stroke only by looking at it. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! One is purified by shaving one's hair there. O great king! There is a tirtha there, known by the name of Shvanalomapaha.[153] O tiger among men! O supreme among the Bharata lineage! Learned brahmanas who are devoted to tirthas, supreme among brahmanas, perform *pranayama*[154] in Shvanalomapaha.[155] O Indra among kings! Purified in this way, they become sanctified and attain the supreme objective. O lord of the earth! Then there is the tirtha known as Dashashvamedhika.[156] O tiger among men! Bathing there, one attains the supreme goal. O Indra among kings! One should then go to Manusha, renowned in the worlds. O king! There, a black antelope was oppressed by a hunter. Plunging into a lake, it assumed the form of a human.[157] Bathing there, as a brahmachari, and conquering one's senses, one is cleansed of all sins and having become pure in soul, attains greatness in the world of heaven. O lord of the earth! The river renowned as Apaga[158] is only a *krosha*[159] to the east of Manusha. This is frequented by the siddhas. A man offering a meal of grain[160] to the gods and the ancestors there attains all the great fruits of dharma. One brahmana fed there is equal to one crore brahmanas being fed. Bathing there and worshipping the ancestors and the gods, and staying there for only a single night, one obtains the fruits of agnishtoma.

"''O Indra among kings! One should then go to Brahma's supreme region. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! This is famous on earth as Brahma's *udumbara*.[161] O bull among the Kuru lineage! O Indra among kings! Whoever bathes there, in the lake of the *saptarshis*,[162] in Kedara of the great-souled Kapishthala,[163] pure and controlled in mind, attains Brahma and cleansed of all sin and pure in soul, attains Brahma's world. On going to Kapishthala and Kedara, difficult of access, all one's sins are burnt through the powers of asceticism and one obtains the powers of disappearance. O Indra among kings! One should then go to Saraka,[164] famous in the worlds. On seeing Vrishadhvaja there on the fourteenth day of *krishnapaksha*,[165] one obtains everything that one desires and goes to the world of heaven. O descendant of the Kuru lineage! There are three crore tirthas in Saraka. O lord of the earth! There are wells and ponds in Rudrakoti. O supreme among the Bharata lineage! The tirtha known as Ilaspada is there. O

descendant of the Bharata lineage! Bathing there and worshipping the ancestors and the gods, one overcomes all misfortunes and attains a horse sacrifice.[166] O lord of the earth! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Bathing in Kimdana and Kimjapya, a man obtains immeasurable donations and prayers.[167] A man who performs ablutions in Kalashi, devoted and while controlling his senses, obtains the fruits of an agnishtoma sacrifice. O best among the supreme of the Kuru lineage! The tirtha of the great-souled Narada is to the east of Saraka and is famous by the name of Anajanma. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! On bathing in that tirtha,[168] after giving up his life, on the instructions of Narada, a man obtains worlds that are difficult to get. On the tenth day of shuklapaksha, one should go to Pundarika. On bathing there, a man obtains the fruits of a *pundarika* sacrifice. One should then go to Trivishtapa, famous in the three worlds. The sacred river Vaitarani, the cleanser of all sins, flows there.[169] Bathing there, and worshipping Vrishadhvaja, the wielder of the trident, one's soul becomes pure and cleansed of all sins, one goes to the supreme goal. O Indra among kings! One should then go to the supreme Phalakivana. O king! The gods always sought refuge in Phalakivana. They performed great austerities for many thousands of years. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Bathing in Drishadvati[170] and worshipping the gods, a man obtains the fruits of agnishtoma and atiratra. O supreme among the Bharata lineage! O Indra among kings! When one bathes in the tirtha of all the gods, a man obtains the fruits of one thousand cows.[171] On bathing in Panikhata and worshipping the gods, a man attains a royal sacrifice and obtains the world of the rishis.

"“‘O Indra among kings! One should then go to the supreme tirtha of Mishraka. O Indra among kings! We have heard that there, the great-souled Vyasa, tiger among men, mixed all the tirthas for the welfare of brahmanas. A man who bathes in Mishraka bathes in all the tirthas. Controlled and restrained in diet, one should then go to Vyasa's grove. A man who bathes in Manojava obtains the fruits of one thousand cows.[172] Going on to the tirtha of the goddess in Madhuvati,[173] a pure man, who bathes and worships the ancestors and the gods with devotion and purity, obtains the fruits of one thousand cows on the instructions of the goddess. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! He who is restrained in diet and bathes at the confluence of the Koushiki and the Dhrishadvati, is freed from all sins. Then there is Vyasasthali.[174] The wise Vyasa was afflicted by sorrow over his son and determined to give up his body there.[175] O Indra among kings! The gods resurrected him there. One who goes to Sthali obtains the fruits of one thousand cows.[176] O extender of the Kuru lineage! If one goes to the well named Kimdatta and offers a measure[177] of sesamum seeds there, one attains the supreme objective and is freed from all one's debts. The tirthas known as Ahas and Sudina are difficult to access. O tiger among men! By bathing there, one attains the world of the

sun. One should then go to Mrigadhuma, renowned in the three worlds. A man who bathes in the pond known as Ganga there, and worships Mahadeva, the wielder of the trident, obtains the fruits of a horse sacrifice. Bathing in Devatirtha, a man obtains the fruits of one thousand cows.[178] One should then go to Vamanaka, famous in the three worlds.[179] Bathing in the mark of Vishnu's foot there and worshipping Vamana, one becomes pure in soul and cleansed of all sins, attains Vishnu's world. Bathing in Kulampuna, a man purifies his own lineage. O tiger among men! A man who goes to Pavana's lake,[180] the supreme tirtha of the Maruts, and bathes there, attains greatness in Vayu's world. O lord of men! Bathing in the lake of the immortals, through the powers of the immortals, one attains greatness in the world of heaven, among the immortals. O Indra among kings! O best among supreme of men! By bathing in Shalishurpa in Shalihotra,[181] in accordance with the rites, a man obtains the fruits of one thousand cows.[182] O supreme among the Bharata lineage! Shrikunja tirtha is on the banks of the Sarasvati. O king! On bathing there, a man obtains the fruits of agnishtoma.

"‘‘O extender of the Kuru lineage! One should then go to the grove known as Naimisha. O Indra among kings! It is said that in ancient times, the sages who lived in Naimisha,[183] rich in their austerities, went on a pilgrimage to Kurukshetra. O supreme among the Bharata lineage! They established a grove on the banks of the Sarasvati. This became a great and satisfying place for the sages to rest. A man who goes and bathes in that grove obtains the fruits of one thousand cows.[184] A man who bathes in Kanyatirtha[185] obtains the fruits of agnishtoma. O tiger among men! From there, one should go to Brahma's supreme region. Bathing there, a man who is from the other varnas becomes a brahmana. A brahmana who is pure in soul attains the supreme objective. O best of men! One should then go to the supreme Somatirtha.[186] O king! On bathing there, a man attains the world of the moon. Then one should go to the tirtha known as Saptasarasvata.[187] Mankanaka, famous in the world of the maharshis, found success there. O king! We have heard that, in ancient times, Mankanaka cut his hand with the tip of *kusha* grass. O king! From that wound flowed out the juices of vegetables. On seeing the vegetable juice, the great ascetic was filled with delight. The brahmana sage widened his eyes in wonder and began to dance. On seeing him dance, all mobile and immobile objects were benumbed by his valour and energy, and also began to dance. O king! O lord of men! Then the gods, with Brahma at the forefront, and the great ascetics, went to Mahadeva and told him about the rishi. "O God! You should act so that he stops dancing." In a desire to ensure the welfare of the gods, the god[188] went to the one who was dancing, having lost his senses in delight, and told him, "O maharshi! O one who is learned in dharma! Why are you dancing? O bull among the

sages! Why are you so delighted today?" The sage replied, "O God! Can you not see vegetable juices flowing from my hand? On seeing this, I am greatly delighted and am dancing."'

'"Pulastya said, 'The god smiled and told the sage, who was deluded in his delight, "O brahmana! I am not surprised. Look at me." O best of men! O king! Having uttered these words, the wise Mahadeva pricked his thumb with his fingernail and from that wound emerged ashes, as white as snow. O king! On seeing this, the sage was struck with shame and fell down at his feet. "I think that there is no other god more supreme than the great Rudra. O wielder of the spear! You are the refuge of the worlds of the gods and the demons. You have created the universe, the three worlds and everything that is mobile and immobile. O illustrious one! It is into you that everything enters at the destruction of a *yuga*. The gods themselves are incapable of comprehending you. How can I? O unblemished one! Brahma and all the other gods can be seen in you. You are everything. You are the maker of the worlds, the one who makes them act. It is through your grace that the gods are free from fear and can rejoice." Having thus prayed to Mahadeva, the sage remained prostrate. The rishi said, "O Mahadeva! Through your grace, may my austerities never diminish." Then the god was delighted and spoke to the brahmarshi. "O brahmana! Through my grace, your austerities will increase thousandfold. O great sage! I will dwell with you in your hermitage. Those who bathe in Saptasarasvata and worship me will get everything that is difficult to obtain, in this world and the next. There is no doubt that they will go to Sarasvati's world."

"'One should then go to Oushanasa,[189] renowned in the three worlds.[190] Brahma, the gods, the sages and the ascetics are there. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! In a desire to ensure Bhargava's[191] welfare, the illustrious Kartikeya is always present there at the time of the three sandhyas. O tiger among men! Bathing in the tirtha known as Kapalamochana, one is cleansed of all sins and is freed from all sins. O bull among men! One should then go and bathe in Agnitirtha, saving one's lineage and attaining the world of Agni. O supreme among the Bharata lineage! Vishvamitra's tirtha is also there.[192] O great king! On bathing there, one is born as a brahmana. O tiger among men! If one goes to Brahmayoni,[193] pure and controlled in mind, and bathes there, one obtains Brahma's world. There is no doubt that seven generations of one's lineage are sanctified. O Indra among kings! One should then go to the tirtha that is renowned in the three worlds. O king! This is famous by the name of Prithudaka and belongs to Kartikeya. Having performed one's ablutions there, one should worship the ancestors and the gods. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Whatever improper act one has committed because of human intelligence, knowingly or unknowingly, whether one is a man or a woman, is destroyed as soon as one bathes there. One obtains the fruits of a horse sacrifice and goes to the world of heaven. The learned say that Kurukshetra is

sacred. But the Sarasvati is more sacred than Kurukshetra. The tirthas are more sacred than Sarasvati and Prithudaka is more sacred than the tirthas. It is supreme among all the tirthas. He who meditates and then gives up his body in Prithudaka, will never be tormented by the fear of death.[194] This has been sung by Sanatkumara[195] and the great-souled Vyasa. O king! It is also the injunction of the Vedas that one should go to Prithudaka. O supreme among men! There is no other tirtha as sacred as Prithudaka. There is no doubt that it is purifying, pure and the destroyer of sins. O best of men! The learned say that even people who commit evil acts go to heaven if they bathe in Prithudaka.

""'O supreme among the Bharata lineage! O king! There is another tirtha named Madhusrava there.[196] On bathing there, a man obtains the fruits of one thousand cows.[197] O best of men! In due order, one should then go to the tirtha of the goddess, famous in the world and at the confluence of the Sarasvati and the Aruna.[198] Having bathed there after fasting for three nights, one is freed from the sin of killing a brahmana. O bull among the Bharata lineage! A man obtains the fruits of agnishtoma and atiratra and sanctifies his lineage for seven generations. O extender of the Kuru lineage! There is another tirtha named Avatirna there. Out of compassion for the brahmanas, Darbhin created it in ancient times. There is no doubt that a twice-born who observes vows, takes up the sacred thread, fasts and follows rituals is a brahmana. O bull among men! But it has been seen from ancient times that one who bathes there, without rituals and without mantras, becomes a brahmana, with all the results of vows. O tiger among men! Darbhin[199] united the four oceans there. Bathing there, one never confronts any calamity. One obtains the fruits of four thousand cows.[200] O Indra among kings! From there, one should go to the tirtha named Shatasahasraka. The tirtha Sahasraka is also there, famous in the world. Bathing in those two, a man obtains the fruits of one thousand cows.[201] His donations and his fasting increase a thousandfold. O Indra among kings! One should then go to the supreme Renuka tirtha.[202] Having performed ablutions there and engaged in the worship of the ancestors and the gods, one is cleansed of all sins and one's soul becomes pure. One obtains the fruits of agnishtoma. On touching the water in Vimochana, controlling one's anger and controlling one's senses, one is freed from all sins connected with acquisition.[203] On going to Panchavata,[204] celibate and in control of one's senses, one obtains great merit and greatness in the world of those who are virtuous. There Yogeshvara Sthanu Vrishadhvaja[205] is always present himself. One who goes there and worships the lord of the gods becomes successful. Varuna's tirtha Oujasa[206] is resplendent in its own energy. There Brahma, the gods and the rishis, rich in austerities, instated Guha[207] as the

general of the army of the gods.

"'O extender of the Kuru lineage! To the east of Oujasa is Kuru tirtha. Bathing in Kuru tirtha, celibate and in control of his senses, a man is cleansed of all sins, becomes pure in soul and attains the world of the Kurus. Controlled and restrained in diet, one should then go to Svargadvara.[208] One attains the world of heaven and goes to the world of Brahma. O lord of men! Then the visitor of tirthas should go to Anaraka. O king! On bathing there, a man never confronts any difficulties. O lord of the earth! O best of men! Brahma himself is always present there, with the gods in attendance, with Narayana at their head. O Indra among kings! O extender of the Kuru lineage! Rudra's wife is always present there. One who approaches the goddess never faces any difficulty. O great king! Vishveshvara,[209] Uma's husband, is also there. One who approaches Mahadeva is freed from all blemishes. O great king! On going to Narayana Padmanabha,[210] the destroyer of enemies, one becomes radiant and goes to Vishnu's world. O bull among men! On bathing at the tirtha of all the gods, a man discards all his misery and blazes like the moon. O lord of men! Then the visitor of tirthas should go to Svastipura. On going to that sacred tirtha and satisfying the ancestors and the gods, a man obtains the fruits of an agnishtoma sacrifice. O bull among the Bharata lineage! There is a lake named Ganga there and a well. O lord of the earth! Three crores of tirthas are in that well.[211] O king! On bathing there, a man attains the world of heaven. Bathing in the river there and worshipping Maheshvara, a man attains the status of a Ganapati and rescues his lineage. One should then go to Sthanuvata, renowned in the three worlds. On bathing and staying there for a night, a man attains Rudra's world. Then one should go to Badaripachana and Vasishtha's hermitage there.[212] After fasting there for three nights, a man should eat jujubes.[213] O lord of men! One who lives only on jujubes for twelve complete years, and one who fasts there for three nights, are equal. O lord of men! The visitor of tirthas then reaches Indra's path. On fasting there for one day and one night, one attains greatness in Shakra's world. Going to Ekaratra and fasting there for one night, controlled and truthful, one attains greatness in Brahma's world. O one learned in dharma! Then one should go to the tirtha that is renowned in the three worlds. This is the hermitage of the great-souled Aditya, full of energy. On bathing there and worshipping Vibhavasu,[214] a man goes to the world of Aditya and rescues his lineage.

"'O extender of the Kuru lineage! A man who is a visitor of tirthas should go and bathe in Soma tirtha. There is no doubt that such a man will go to the world of the moon. O one learned in dharma! One should then go to the tirtha of the great-souled Dadhicha. O king! This is pure and purifying and is famous in the world. Angiras of the Sarasvata lineage, treasure of austerities, is there. A man who bathes in that tirtha obtains the fruits of a horse sacrifice and there is no doubt that he attains Sarasvati's

world.[215] Controlled and celibate, one should then go to Kanyashrama. O king! If one fasts and lives there for three nights, one obtains one hundred celestial maidens and goes to Brahma's world. Brahma, the gods, the sages and the ascetics go there every month and obtain great merits. If one touches the water at Samnihiti when the sun has been devoured by Rahu,[216] one has obtained one hundred eternal horse sacrifices.[217] Whatever tirthas exist on earth and in the sky, female rivers, male rivers, lakes, all streams, wells, ponds and everything else that is sacred, there is no doubt that they are gathered every month at Samnihiti. Whatever evil act a man or a woman may have committed, there is no doubt that they are all destroyed on bathing there. One goes to Brahma's world in a lotus-coloured vehicle. Having worshipped the yaksha gatekeeper Arantuka, if one touches the water in Kotirupa, one obtains a lot of gold. O supreme among the Bharata lineage! There is a tirtha, a pond named Ganga, there. O one learned in dharma! On bathing there, controlled and celibate, one obtains the eternal fruits of royal and horse sacrifices. There is a sacred tirtha Naimisha on earth and Pushkara in the sky. But in all the three worlds, Kurukshetra is special. Even the dust carried away by the wind in Kurukshetra takes the performer of evil acts to the supreme objective. To the south is Sarasvati and to the north Drishadvati.[218] Those who live in Kurukshetra live in heaven. "I will go to Kurukshetra, I will live in Kurukshetra." He who utters this single sentence is cleansed of all sins. O king! Those who live in sacred Kurukshetra, Brahma's altar and frequented by the brahmarshis, there is no doubt that one should not sorrow for them. The region between Tarantuka and Arantuka and between Machakruka and Rama's lakes is Kurukshetra Samantapanchaka[219] and is known as the grandfather's northern altar.'""[220]

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'"Pulastya said, 'O one learned in dharma! One should then go to the ancient Dharmatirtha. O king! There is no doubt that a man who bathes there, controlled and devoted to dharma, sanctifies his lineage for seven generations. O one learned in dharma! One should then go to the supreme Karapatana. One obtains agnishtoma and goes to the world of the sages. O king! A man should then go to the forest Sougandhika.[221] Brahma, the gods, the sages and the ascetics are there and the siddhas, the charanas, the gandharvas, the *kinnaras*[222] and the great nagas. As soon as one enters the forest, one is freed from all sins. O king! The best of streams, the supreme of rivers, the immensely sacred goddess and river, Sarasvati, flows in Plaksha.[223] On performing one's ablutions there, from the water that issues from an anthill, and worshipping the ancestors and the gods, one obtains the fruits of a horse sacrifice. There is a tirtha named Ishanadhyushita[224] there, difficult of access and determined to be six

throws of a *shamya* away from the anthill.[225] O tiger among men! It has been seen in the ancient accounts, that on bathing there, one obtains a thousand tawny cows and a horse sacrifice.[226] O descendant of the Bharata lineage! O best of men! If one goes to Sugandha, Shatakumbha and Panchayajna, one obtains greatness in the world of heaven. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The tirtha known as Trishulakhata is also there. On performing ablutions there, engaged in the worship of the ancestors and the gods, there is no doubt that after discarding one's body, one attains the status of a Ganapati.

"“‘O Indra among kings! One should then go the place of the goddess that is difficult of access. This is famous in the three worlds by the name of Shakambhari.[227] O lord of men! Strict in her vows, for a thousand divine years, she subsisted on vegetables, month after month. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Rishis, ascetics and devotees of the goddess came there and the guests were entertained with offerings of vegetables. Her name of Shakambhari was thus established. On going to Shakambhari, celibate and controlled, one should live there for three nights, eating vegetables and restrained and pure. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Through the grace of the goddess, a visit there is equal in fruits to living on vegetables for twelve years.

"“‘Then one should go to Suvarnaksha, renowned in the three worlds. In ancient times, to win his favours, Vishnu propitiated Rudra there. He obtained many rare boons, difficult even among the gods. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The destroyer of Tripura[228] was satisfied and told him, “O Krishna! You will be more loved in the world. There is no doubt that your mouth will be the entire universe.” O Indra among kings! Going there and worshipping Vrishadhvaja, one attains a horse sacrifice and the status of a Ganapati. Then a man should go to Dhumavati[229] and fast there for three nights, obtaining certainly everything that one desires in one's mind. O lord of men! Rathavarta is towards the south[230] of the goddess. O one learned in dharma! One should ascend it with faith, and in control of one's senses. Through Mahadeva's grace, one then obtains the supreme objective. O bull among the Bharata lineage! O immensely wise one! After circumambulating it, one should go to Dhara, the cleanser of all sins. O tiger among men! O lord of men! On bathing there, one never sorrows. O one learned in dharma! After showing obeisance to the great mountain, one should then go to the gate of the Ganga.[231] There is no doubt that this is like the gate of heaven. On bathing there in Kotitirtha, controlled in mind, one obtains pundarika sacrifice and saves one's lineage. On satisfying the gods and the ancestors in Saptaganga,[232] Triganga and Shakravarta, in accordance with the prescriptions, one obtains greatness in the world of the virtuous. Then bathing in Kanakhala[233] and fasting there for three nights, a man obtains a horse sacrifice and goes to the world of heaven. O lord of men! The visitor of

tirthas should then go to Kapilavata.[234] Staying there for one night, one obtains the fruits of one thousand cows. O Indra among kings! O best among the supreme of the Kuru lineage! This is the tirtha of the great-souled Kapila, king of the nagas. It is renowned in all the worlds. O lord of men! On performing ablutions in that tirtha of the nagas, a man obtains the fruits of one thousand tawny cows. Then one should go to Lalitika, Shantanu's supreme tirtha. O king! On bathing there, a man never confronts difficulties. A man who bathes at the confluence of the Ganga and the Sangama,[235] obtains ten horse sacrifices and rescues his lineage. O Indra among kings! From there, one should go to Sugandha, famous in the worlds. Cleansed of all sin and pure of soul, one attains greatness in Brahma's world. O lord of men! The visitor of tirthas should then go to Rudravarta. O king! On bathing there, a man obtains greatness in the world of heaven. O best of men! On bathing at the confluence of the Ganga and the Sarasvati, one obtains a horse sacrifice and goes to the world of heaven.[236]

"'On going to Bhadrakarneshvara and worshipping the gods in accordance with the rites, one never confronts difficulties and goes to the world of heaven. O lord of men! The visitor of tirthas should then go to Kubjamraka. One obtains the fruits of one thousand cows and goes to heaven. O lord of men! The visitor of tirthas should then go to Arundhativata. On touching the water at Samudraka, and fasting there for three nights, a man obtains the fruits of one thousand cows and rescues his lineage. Celibate and controlled in mind, one should then go to Brahmavarta. One obtains a horse sacrifice and goes to the world of heaven. On going to the source of the Yamuna[237] and touching the water of the Yamuna there, one obtains the fruits of a horse sacrifice and attains greatness in the world of heaven. Then one should go to the tirtha named Darvisamkramana, famous in the three worlds. One obtains a horse sacrifice and goes to the world of heaven. On going to the source of the Sindhu,[238] frequented by siddhas and gandharvas, and staying there for five nights, one obtains a lot of gold. On going thereafter to Vedi, extremely difficult of access, a man obtains a horse sacrifice and the goal of Ushanas.[239] O descendant of the Bharata lineage! One should then go to Rishikulya[240] and Vasishtha. On going to Vasishtha, all the other varnas become brahmanas. O lord of men, having bathed in Rishikulya, a man attains the world of the rishis, if one lives there for one month and subsists on vegetables.'

"'On going to Bhrigutunga, one obtains the fruits of a horse sacrifice. On going to Virapramoksha, one is freed from all sins. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! On going to the tirthas of Krittika and Magha, a virtuous man obtains the fruits of agnishtoma and atiratra. On going to the supreme Vidyatirtha in the evening, and touching the water there, one becomes skilled in all forms of knowledge. If one spends a night in Mahashrama, eating once a day, one is cleansed of all sins and attains the worlds of the pure. Living there for one month at the time of Mahalaya[241] and eating

once in three days, one is cleansed of all sins, the soul becomes pure, and one obtains a lot of gold. One should then go to Vetasika, frequented by the grandfather.[242] One obtains a horse sacrifice and goes to the objective of Ushanas. Then, on reaching the tirtha of Sundarika, frequented by the siddhas, as has been witnessed in the ancient texts, one becomes handsome. Then, going on to Brahmani, celibate and in control of one's senses, one goes to Brahma's world in a lotus-coloured vehicle. Then one should go to the sacred Naimisha, frequented by the siddhas. Brahma always resides there, together with the masses of the gods. Even if one desires to go to Naimisha, half of one's sins are destroyed. As soon as a man enters it, all his sins are cleansed. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The wise visitor of tirthas should live in Naimisha for a month. All the tirthas of the earth are in Naimisha. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Bathing there, controlled and restrained in diet, one obtains the fruits of a sacrifice in which cows are donated. O supreme among the Bharata lineage! One also rescues one's lineage for seven generations. It is said by the wise ones that he who gives up his life in Naimisha through fasting, finds delight in the world of heaven. O supreme among kings! Naimisha is always sacred and holy.

'"On going to Gangobheda and fasting there for three nights, a man obtains a horse sacrifice and is born like Brahma. Going to the Sarasvati, one should satisfy the ancestors and the gods. There is no doubt that one finds delight in Sarasvati's world. Celibate and controlled, one should then go to Bahuda. A man then obtains the fruits of a *devasatra*[243] sacrifice. Then one should go to the sacred Chiravati, surrounded by holy ones. Worshipping the ancestors and the gods there, one obtains a horse sacrifice. On going to Vimalashoka, one shines like the moon. Spending a night there, one attains greatness in the world of heaven. One should then go to Gopratara, the supreme of tirthas on the Sarayu. Rama went to heaven there, with his servants, forces and vehicles.[244] O lord of men! On bathing at the tirtha of Gopratara, a man is cleansed of all sins, becomes pure in soul and attains greatness in the world of heaven. O descendant of the Kuru lineage! If a man bathes in Rama's tirtha on the Gomati,[245] he obtains a horse sacrifice, and the man's lineage is saved. O supreme among the Bharata lineage! The tirtha Shatasahasrika is there. O bull among the Bharata lineage! On bathing there, controlled and restrained in diet, one obtains the sacred fruits of one thousand cows. O Indra among kings! One should then go to the supreme region of Bhartri. O king! On bathing in Kotitirtha and worshipping Guha,[246] a man obtains the fruits of one thousand cows. Such a man becomes energetic. On going to Varanasi and worshipping Vrishadhvaja, and bathing in the pond known as Kapila, one attains a royal sacrifice. O Indra among kings! On going to Markandeya's tirtha, difficult of access and famous in the worlds, located at the confluence of the Gomati and the Ganga, one obtains agnishtoma and rescues one's lineage. Celibate and in control of one's

senses, one should then go to Gaya. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! On going there, one obtains a horse sacrifice. Akshayavata, famous in the three worlds, is there. O lord! Whatever is offered to the ancestors there becomes inexhaustible. On bathing in Mahanadi and satisfying the ancestors and the gods, one attains the inexhaustible worlds and saves one's lineage. On going to Brahma's lake, adorned with Dharma's forests, one attains a pundarika sacrifice, as soon as night becomes dawn. O Indra among kings! Brahma's sacrificial pole rises high in that lake. On circumambulating the pole, one obtains the fruits of a horse sacrifice.

'"O Indra among kings! One should then go to Dhenuka, famous in the world. O king! On staying there for one night and donating sesamum and a cow, all sins are cleansed, one becomes pure in soul and there is no doubt that one goes to the world of the moon. O great king! There is no doubt that, even today, there is a sign there. A cow, with her calf, used to roam over that mountain. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Her hoof-marks, and those of her calf, can be seen there, even today. O Indra among kings! O supreme among kings! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! On touching water at these hoof-marks, whatever evil acts one has committed are destroyed. Then one should go to Gridhravata, the place where the wise god is established. On going to Vrishadhvaja, one should bathe in ashes. If one is a brahmana, one will obtain a vow of twelve years.[247] If one is from an inferior varna, all one's sins will be destroyed. O bull among the Bharata lineage! Then one should go to Mount Udyanta, filled with the sound of singing. The footprint of Savita[248] can be seen there. Rigid in vows, a brahmana who observes the sandhya prayers there is like one who has observed sandhya prayers for twelve years. O bull among the Bharata lineage! The famous Yonidvara[249] is there. On going there, a man is freed from any mixing up of varnas.[250] O king! If a man lives in Gaya during both shuklapaksha and krishnapaksha, there is no doubt that his lineage is sanctified for seven generations. If one wishes for many sons, one should only go to Gaya, or perform a horse sacrifice, or set free a blue bull.[251] O king! O lord of men! The visitor of tirthas should then go to Phalgu.[252] He obtains a horse sacrifice and goes to great success. O Indra among kings! Controlled, one should then go to Dharmaprastha. O great king! O Yudhishthira! Dharma is always present there. Going there, one obtains the fruits of a horse sacrifice. O Indra among kings! One should then go to the supreme Brahmatirtha. O Indra among kings! There, worshipping Brahma, whose energy is unlimited, a man obtains the fruits of a royal sacrifice and a horse sacrifice.

'"O lord of men! The visitor of tirthas should then go to Rajagriha.[253] On touching the warm water there, one becomes the equal of Kakshivat[254] and finds delight. On partaking from the daily offerings made to the yakshini there, a man becomes pure. Through the grace of the yakshini, one is freed from the sin of killing an embryo. Going to Maninaga, one obtains the fruits of one thousand cows. If one partakes from the

daily offerings made to Maninaga, and stays there for one night, one is freed from all sins and terrible serpent's venom does not cause harm. O king! Then one should go to brahmarshi Goutama's forest. Bathing in Ahalya's[255] lake, one goes to the supreme objective. O king! On going to Shri,[256] one obtains supreme prosperity. O one learned in dharma! There is a spring there, renowned in the three worlds. Performing one's ablutions there, one obtains a horse sacrifice. There is also *rajarshi*[257] Janaka's well, worshipped by the thirty gods.[258] On performing one's ablutions there, one attains Vishnu's world. One should then go to Vinashana,[259] which frees from all sins. One obtains the fruits of a horse sacrifice and goes to the world of the moon. On going to Gandaki,[260] created from the water of all the tirthas, one obtains a horse sacrifice and goes to the world of the sun. O one learned in dharma! One should then go to the hermitage Adhivamshya. O great king! There is no doubt that one finds delight among the *guhyakas*.[261] Going on to the river Kampana, frequented by the siddhas, one obtains a pundarika sacrifice and goes to the world of the sun. Then going to the river Vishala, renowned in the three worlds, one obtains agnishtoma and goes to the world of heaven. O lord of men! On going to the rivulet Maheshvari, one attains a horse sacrifice and rescues one's lineage. On going to the celestial pond, a pure man never confronts difficulties and attains a horse sacrifice. Celibate and controlled, one should then go to Maheshvarapada. On bathing in Maheshvarapada, one obtains the fruits of a horse sacrifice. O bull among the Bharata lineage! O Indra among kings! There are one crore famous tirthas there and these were carried away by an evil-souled demon in the form a tortoise. O king! While they were being carried away, Vishnu recovered them through Vishnu's powers. O Yudhishthira! On performing ablutions at the one crore tirthas, one obtains a pundarika sacrifice and goes to Vishnu's world. O Indra among kings! One should then go to Narayana's region. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Hari always dwells near that place. Vishnu, the performer of extraordinary deeds, is famous by the name of Shalagrama there.[262] On going to Vishnu, without decay, the granter of boons and the lord of the three worlds, one obtains a horse sacrifice and goes to Vishnu's world.

'"O one learned in dharma! There is a well there that frees from all sins. The four oceans are always present in this well. O Indra among kings! By touching the water there, one never confronts any difficulties. On going to Mahadeva,[263] Vishnu without decay and the granter of boons, one shines like the moon and is freed from all one's debts. If one touches the water in Jatismara, pure and controlled in mind, there is no doubt that one can recall one's past lives by bathing there. Going to Vateshvarapura and fasting and worshipping Keshava, there is no doubt that one satisfies all one's wishes and desires. Thereafter, on going to Vamana, one is freed from all sins. On worshipping

the god Hari, one never confronts any difficulties. Then one should go to Bharata's hermitage, which frees from all sins. There, a man should go to the Koushiki,[264] the destroyer of great sins, and obtain the fruits of a royal sacrifice. O, one learned in dharma! Then one should go to the supreme forest of Champaka. Spending a night there, one obtains the fruits of one thousand cows. Then one should go the supremely revered tirtha of Jyeshthila. Fasting and spending a night there, one obtains the fruits of agnishtoma. O bull among men! On seeing the immensely radiant lord of the universe there,[265] together with the goddess, one attains the world of Mitra and Varuna. O bull among the Bharata lineage! On going to Kanyasamveda, controlled and restrained in diet, one goes to the world of Prajapati Manu. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Whatever drink or food is offered at Kanya becomes inexhaustible. This is what sages, rigid in their vows, have said. On going to Nishchira,[266] renowned in the three worlds, one attains a horse sacrifice and goes to Vishnu's world. O tiger among men! There is no doubt that men who donate at the confluence of Nishchira, go to Brahma's world. Vasishtha's hermitage, renowned in the three worlds, is there. On performing ablutions there, one attains a horse sacrifice.

'"On going to Devakuta, frequented by masses of brahmarshis, one attains a horse sacrifice and rescues one's lineage. O Indra among kings! Then one should go the lake of the sage Koushika. In ancient times, Koushika's son Vishvamitra obtained success there. O bull among the Bharata lineage! On staying for a month at brave Koushika's place, one obtains within a month the merits of a horse sacrifice. He who dwells in that great lake, supreme among all the tirthas, never confronts any difficulty and obtains a lot of gold. On going to Kumara,[267] who dwells in Virashrama, there is no doubt that a man obtains a horse sacrifice. On going to Agnidhara, renowned in the three worlds, and bathing there, one obtains agnishtoma and does not return from heaven. On going to the grandfather's[268] lake, established in the king of the mountains,[269] and performing one's ablutions there, one obtains the fruits of agnishtoma. From the grandfather's lake issues the stream of Kumaradhara, renowned in the three worlds and the purifier of the world. On bathing there, one knows in one's own mind that one has become successful. If one eats once in three days there, one is freed from the sin of killing a brahmana. The peak of the great goddess Gouri is famous in the three worlds. A devoted man should climb, and touching the waters of Stanakunda[270] and worshipping the ancestors and the gods, obtain a horse sacrifice and go to Shakra's world. Celibate and controlled, one goes to Tamraruna and obtaining a horse sacrifice, goes to Shakra's world. One goes to the well named Nandini, frequented by the thirty gods. O extender of the Kuru lineage! One then obtains the fruits of a human sacrifice. On bathing in Kalika, the confluence of the Koushiki and the Aruna, and fasting for three nights, a learned one is freed from all sins. Going to Urvashi tirtha and the hermitage of the moon, and bathing in the

hermitage of Kumbhakarna, a wise man is worshipped by the earth. Bathing in the sacred Kokamukha, celibate and careful in vows, it has been seen in the ancient accounts that one can recall one's earlier births. A brahmana who has gone to Nanda becomes successful and accomplished in his soul. He is cleansed of all sins, becomes pure of soul and goes to Shakra's world. On going to the island Rishabha, worthy of a visit and inhabited by curlews, and touching the waters of the Sarasvati, one becomes resplendent in a celestial vehicle. O great king! Ouddalaka tirtha is frequented by the sages. On performing one's ablutions there, one is freed from all sins. On going to the sacred Dharmatirtha, frequented by brahmarshis, there is no doubt that a man obtains a horse sacrifice. On going to Champa and touching the waters of the Bhagirathi and on going to Dandarka, one obtains the fruits of one thousand cows. On going to the sacred Lavedika, frequented by holy ones, one obtains a horse sacrifice and is worshipped in a celestial vehicle.'"

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'"Pulastya said, 'On going to the supreme tirtha of Samvedya in the evening, and touching the water there, there is no doubt that a man obtains knowledge. O king! Then going to Louhitya, the tirtha created through Rama's favour in ancient times, one obtains a lot of gold.[271] On going to Karatoya[272] and fasting there for three nights, following the rites laid down by the grandfather,[273] a man obtains a horse sacrifice. O Indra among kings! On going to the confluence of the Ganga with the ocean, the learned have said that one obtains ten times a horse sacrifice. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! O king! If one goes to the island that is on the other bank of the Ganga,[274] bathing and fasting there for three nights, all one's desires are satisfied. Then one should go to the river Vaitarani,[275] the cleanser of all sins. Going to the tirtha known as Viraja, one shines like the moon. Sanctifying one's own lineage, one is cleansed of all sins. A man makes his own lineage pure and obtains the fruits of ten thousand cows.[276] On dwelling at the confluence of the Shona and the Jyotirathi, pure and restrained, and worshipping the ancestors and the gods, one obtains the fruits of agnishtoma. O descendant of the Kuru lineage! On touching the water at Vamshagulma, the source of the Shona and the Narmada,[277] one obtains the fruits of a horse sacrifice. O lord of men! On going to Rishabha tirtha in Kosala and fasting there for three nights, a man obtains a horse sacrifice. On going to Kosala and touching the waters at Kala tirtha, there is no doubt that one obtains the fruits of eleven bulls.[278] Performing ablutions in Pushpavati, and fasting for three nights, a man obtains the fruits of one thousand cows and also rescues his lineage. Then bathing in Badarika tirtha, [279] controlled in mind, one obtains a long life and goes to the world of heaven.

"'‘Then, going to Mahendra, frequented by Jamadagni’s son, and bathing at Rama tirtha,[280] a man obtains the fruits of a horse sacrifice. O descendant of the Kuru lineage! O King! On going to Matanga’s Kedara[281] and bathing there, a man obtains the fruits of one thousand cows. On going to Mount Shri[282] and touching the water on the banks of the river, one obtains a horse sacrifice and goes to the world of heaven. The immensely radiant Mahadeva dwells in great delight on Mount Shri with the goddess, together with Brahma and the thirty gods. On bathing at the lake of the gods there, pure and restrained in mind, one obtains a horse sacrifice and goes to supreme success. On going to Mount Rishabha in Pandya,[283] worshipped by the gods, one obtains a horse sacrifice and finds delight in the vault of the sky.[284] One should then go to Kaveri,[285] frequented by masses of apsaras. O king! On bathing there, a man obtains the fruits of one thousand cows. Then one should bathe in Kanyatirtha,[286] on the shores of the ocean. O Indra among kings! On bathing there, one is freed from all sins. Then one should go to Gokarna,[287] renowned in the three worlds. O Indra among kings! It is in the middle of the ocean and is worshipped by all the worlds. Brahma, the gods, the rishis, the ascetics, the *bhutas*,[288] the yakshas, the *pishachas*,[289] the kinnaras, the great nagas, the siddhas, the charanas, the gandharvas, humans, the pannagas, rivers, oceans and mountains worship Uma’s consort there. On worshipping Ishana there and fasting for three nights, a man obtains a horse sacrifice and attains the status of a Ganapati. A man who lives there for twelve nights becomes pure of soul. Then one should go to the region of Gayatri, famous in the three worlds.[290] After staying there for three nights, one obtains the fruits of one thousand cows. O lord of men! For brahmanas, something special can be witnessed there. O king! When one born of mixed varna recites the gayatri there, it becomes metrical and musical.[291]

"'‘On going to the pond of the brahmana rishi Samvarta, difficult of access, one obtains personal beauty and great fortune. On going to Venna[292] and worshipping the ancestors and the gods, a man obtains a celestial chariot drawn by peacocks and swans. Then one goes to Godavari, always frequented by the siddhas, obtaining a cow sacrifice and attaining Vasuki’s world. On bathing at the confluence of Venna, one obtains the fruits of a horse sacrifice. On bathing at the confluence of Varada,[293] one obtains the fruits of one thousand cows. On going to Brahma’s region and dwelling there for three nights, a man obtains the fruits of one thousand cows and goes to the world of heaven. On going to Kushaplavana, celibate and controlled in mind, and bathing and living there for three nights, one obtains the fruits of a horse sacrifice. Then one should go to the beautiful lake of the gods, the source of the waters of the Krishna and the Venna.[294] O king! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Bathing in the lake known as Jatimatra

and in the hermitage of the maiden, where the king of the gods performed one hundred sacrifices and went to heaven, one obtains one hundred agnishtomas from the act of merely going there. On bathing at the lake of all the gods, one obtains the fruits of one thousand cows. On bathing in the lake known as Jatimatra, a man can recollect his earlier lives. Then one should go the immensely pure Payoshni, supreme among rivers.[295] Worshipping the ancestors and the gods, one will obtain the fruits of one thousand cows. O great king! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! On going to the Dandaka forest and touching the waters there, one obtains the fruits of one thousand cows as soon as one has bathed there. On going to the hermitage of Sharabhanga and the great-souled Shukra, a man never confronts any difficulty and rescues his lineage. On going to Shurparaka, frequented by Jamadagni's son and bathing in Rama's tirtha, a man obtains a lot of gold.[296] On bathing in Saptagodavari,[297] restrained and controlled in diet, one obtains great merits and goes to the world of the gods. Restrained and controlled in diet, one treads the path of the gods, and a man thus obtains the merits of a divine sacrifice.

"'One goes to the Tungaka forest, celibate and in control of one's senses. In ancient times, the rishi Sarasvata had taught the Vedas there. The Vedas were lost. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Seated on the upper garments of the maharshis, the son of the sage Angiras taught them and pronounced the syllables of 'OM', accurately and as they should be uttered.[298] Immediately, everything that had been learnt before returned to memory. The rishis, the gods, Varuna, Agni, Prajapati, the god Hari Narayana, Mahadeva and the illustrious grandfather[299] together with the immensely radiant other gods, appointed the immensely radiant Bhrigu as a priest for their sacrifice there. In accordance with the prescribed rites and in accordance with the prescribed rituals, and for the sake of the sages, the lord[300] once again invoked and worshipped the fire. Satisfied with their shares, the gods left for the three worlds and the sages went where they wished. O best of kings! When one enters Tungaka, whether one is a man or a woman, all one's sins are destroyed. O king! If a wise one dwells there for a month, controlled and restrained in diet, one goes to Brahma's world and saves one's lineage. On going to Medhavika and satisfying the ancestors and the gods, one obtains agnishtoma and memory and intellect. There is the peak named Kalanjara, renowned in the world.[301] On bathing in the lake of the gods there, one obtains the fruits of one thousand cows. O king! There is no doubt that a man who purifies his soul in Mount Kalanjara obtains greatness in the world of heaven. O lord of the earth! Then one goes to Mandakini, the cleanser of all sins, in Chitrakuta, best among the supreme of mountains.[302] On performing one's ablutions there and worshipping the ancestors and the gods, one obtains a horse sacrifice and goes to the supreme objective.

"'O Indra among kings! Then one should go to the supreme region of Bhartri. O king!

The god Mahasena[303] is always established there. A man who bathes in Kotitirtha, obtains the fruits of one thousand cows. After circumambulating it, one should go to Jyeshthasthana. On going to Mahadeva, one becomes as resplendent as the moon. O great king! O bull among the Bharata lineage! O Yudhishthira![304] There is a famous well there and the four oceans reside in it. O Indra among kings! On touching the waters there and circumambulating it, pure and controlled in soul, a man goes to the supreme objective. O best among the Kuru lineage. Then one should go to the great Shringaverapura. O great king! In ancient times, Rama, Dasharatha's son, crossed there.[305] A man who bathes in the Ganga there, celibate and controlled, is washed of all sin and attains a horse sacrifice. O lord of men! On going to Mahadeva and worshipping and circumambulating him, one attains the status of a Ganapati.

""O Indra among kings! One should then go to Prayaga, praised by the rishis. There dwell Brahma and the other gods, the directions and the lords of the directions, the lords of the worlds, the sadhyas, the *nairritas*,[306] the ancestors, the supreme rishis with Sanatkumara at their head, the other brahmarshis led by Angiras, the nagas, the *suparnas*,[307] the siddhas, the *chakracharas*,[308] the rivers, the oceans, the gandharvas, the apsaras and the illustrious Hari, worshipped by Prajapati. There are three pits of fire and through their middle, Jahnavi,[309] worshipped among all the tirthas, flows out of Prayaga. The goddess who is Tapana's daughter is famous in the three worlds.[310] The Yamuna flows with the Ganga, the purifier of the world. The region between the Ganga and the Yamuna is known as the loins of the earth. The learned sages know that Prayaga is the supreme spot in these loins. Prayaga, Pratishthana, Kambala, Ashvatara and the tirtha of Bhogavati are known as Prajapati's altars. O Yudhishthira![311] The Vedas and sacrifices become personified there. Rishis, rich in austerities, worship Prajapati there. O king! The gods and chakracharas worship him with sacrifices. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! There is no other place as sacred as this. O lord! Prayaga's power is greater than that of all the tirthas. Even if a man hears of this tirtha, or chants its name, or obtains a bit of its clay, he is freed from sins. He who performs his ablutions at the confluence, strict in his vows, obtains the sacred fruits of royal and horse sacrifices. This sacrificial ground is worshipped even by the gods. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Even if a little bit is given there, it becomes great. O son! Let not the words of the Vedas or the sayings of the world dissuade you from your intention of dying in Prayaga. O descendant of the Kuru lineage! It is said that there are sixty crore and ten thousand tirthas there. From merely bathing at the confluence of the Ganga and the Yamuna, one obtains all the merits of a truthful person learned in the four Vedas. Vasuki's supreme tirtha named Bhogavati is there.[312] On performing ablutions there, one obtains a horse sacrifice. O descendant of the Kuru lineage! On the Ganga there is

the tirtha known as Hamsaprapatana,[313] famous in the three worlds, and Dashashvamedhika.[314] O great king! The region where the Ganga is, is fit for hermitages. The region along the banks of the Ganga is the place where success can be obtained. This truth should only be recited into the ears of brahmanas, righteous ones, one's son, well-wishers, disciples and dependents. This brings dharma. This brings sanctity. This brings purity. This brings happiness. This brings heaven. This brings beauty. This brings supreme purification. This is the secret of the maharshis, this is the cleanser of all sins. By learning this among brahmanas, one is freed from all blemishes.

"''He who hears about the eternal sanctity of the tirthas, will always be pure. He will be able to remember his earlier births and will find delight in the vault of the sky.[315] Some of the tirthas recounted are easy of access, others difficult of access. But if one wishes to visit all the tirthas, one should go to the latter in one's mind. In a desire to perform good deeds, the Vasus, the Sadhyas, the Adityas, the Maruts, the Ashvins and the rishis, who are equal to the gods, have gone there. O Kouravya! Good in vows and controlled, and according to the precepts, you must also go to the sacred tirthas and increase your merits. Those who are learned, those who are honest and those who have insight are able to reach these tirthas because of their virtue, their purity, their belief and their learning of the sacred texts. One who does not observe vows, one who has not cleansed his soul, one who is not pure, or one who is a thief, cannot bathe in these tirthas. O Kouravya! Nor can a man whose mind is crooked. You have always been good in conduct. You have always had insight on dharma and artha. O son! You have saved your fathers and all your ancestors. O king! The gods, with Brahma leading them, together with the masses of rishis, have always been satisfied by your dharma and your knowledge of dharma. You are equal to Vasava.[316] You will attain the world of the Vasus. O Bhishma! Your deeds will be great and you will obtain eternal fame on earth.'"

'Narada said, "Having spoken these words and taking his[317] leave, the illustrious rishi Pulastya, pleased and in a delighted frame of mind, immediately disappeared. Bhishma, tiger among the Kuru lineage and with insight about the import of the sacred texts, travelled throughout the earth on Pulastya's words. He who travels throughout the earth according to these instructions, after his death, obtains the fruits of one hundred horse sacrifices. O Partha![318] According to supreme dharma, you will obtain eight times those merits. Because you will lead the rishis there, your fruits will be eight times. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Those tirthas are infested by masses of rakshasas. O descendant of the Kuru lineage! No one except you can go there. He who awakes in the morning and recites this account of all the tirthas, as told by the *devarshi*,[319] is freed from all sins. The foremost among the rishis—Valmiki, Kashyapa, Atreya, Koundinya, Vishvamitra, Goutama, Asita-Devala, Markandeya, Galava, Bharadvaja, Vasishtha, the sage Uddalaka, Shounaka and his son, Vyasa who is supreme among those who

meditate, Durvasa who is the best of sages and the great ascetic Galava[320]—all these supreme rishis, rich in austerities, are waiting for you. O great king! Go and visit the tirthas and meet them. The immensely radiant devarshi named Lomasha will come to you and you must travel with him. O one learned in dharma! You can go to the tirthas with me too. You will obtain great fame, as did King Mahabhisha.[321] O tiger among the Kuru lineage! Like Yayati who had dharma in his soul and like King Pururava, you will also blaze with your dharma. Like King Bhagiratha and like the famous Rama, you will also shine among all the kings, like the one with the rays.[322] Like Manu, like Ikshvaku, like the immensely famous Puru and like the immensely energetic Vainya, you will also be famous. Just as in earlier times, the slayer of Vritra[323] burnt down all his enemies, you will destroy your enemies and protect your subjects. O lotus-eyed one! Having obtained the earth, conquered with your dharma, you will obtain fame with your dharma, like Kartaviryarjuna."'

Vaishampayana said, 'Having thus reassured the king, the illustrious rishi Narada took his leave of the great-souled one[324] and instantly disappeared. Yudhishthira, with dharma in his soul, reflected on this and recounted to the rishis the eternal merits that derive from going to the tirthas.'

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Vaishampayana said, 'Having ascertained the thoughts of his brothers and those of the wise Narada, King Yudhishthira then spoke to Dhoumya, who was like the grandfather[325] himself. "I have sent into exile Jishnu, tiger among men and for whom truth is his valour, the mighty-armed one whose soul is unlimited, for the sake of weapons. O one rich in austerities! That brave one is devoted and capable. He is skilled in the use of weapons and is like the lord Vasudeva himself. O brahmana! I know those two brave Krishnas,[326] the slayers of enemies, just as the powerful Vyasa knows Pundarikaksha[327] Vasudeva and Dhananjaya of the three *yugas*.[328] Narada also knows this and has spoken to me about this. I know them to be the sages Nara and Narayana. Therefore, knowing that he was capable, I sent Arjuna to set his eyes on the king of the gods and obtain weapons from him. He is capable, he is the son of a god and he is not inferior to Indra. That is the reason he was exiled. Bhishma and Drona are *atirathas*[329] and Kripa and Drona's son[330] are invincible. These immensely strong ones have been engaged by Dhritarashtra's son for the war. They are all knowledgeable in the Vedas, they are valiant and they are all skilled in the use of weapons. Then there is also Karna, the maharatha who is the son of a *suta*[331] and has the knowledge of divine weapons. That immensely strong one has always wanted to fight with Partha. He has the speed of

a horse and the strength of the wind. His arrows roar from a flaming base. The dust[332] is like the smoke. Unleashed by the wind of Dhritarashtra's son, his weapons scorch. He has been unleashed, like the flames of destruction at the end of a yuga, released by time. There is no doubt that he will scorch my soldiers like dried grass. There is the wind raised by Krishna, with a great cloud of divine weapons and with his white steeds like cranes. The blazing Gandiva is like Indra's weapon.[333] Only a shower of those arrows, unfurled from Arjuna's cloud can pacify in battle Karna's blazing flames. Bibhatsu, the destroyer of enemy cities, will certainly obtain from Shakra himself all the divine weapons and their knowledge. I keep thinking that he is equal to all of them. No one can act against him in battle, nor will the enemies be able to react. All of us Pandavas will see Dhananjaya with the weapons that he has obtained. Bibhatsu has never been seen to be dragged down under the weight of something he has undertaken. O supreme among those who have two feet! But in this Kamyaka forest, in that warrior's absence and with Krishna with us, we will never find peace of mind. Therefore, tell us of another forest that is sacred and lovely and has a lot of food and fruit, frequented by the performers of virtuous deeds. We should be able to spend some time there and wait for the brave Arjuna, for whom truth is his valour, to return, just as those desirous of rain wait for the clouds. Tell us about the different hermitages that have been listed by brahmanas, about lakes and rivers and beautiful mountains. O brahmana! Bereft of Arjuna, residence in this Kamyaka forest no longer seems attractive to us. Let us go in some other direction."'

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Vaishampayana said, 'On seeing all the Pandavas anxious and miserable in their minds, Dhoumya, who was like Brihaspati himself, reassured them and said, "O bull among the Bharata lineage! O king! Let me mention sacred hermitages, directions, tirthas and mountains approved of by brahmanas. Listen as I speak. O king! O Yudhishthira! As I remember it, I will first describe to you the beautiful eastern direction, frequented by masses of rajarshis. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! In that region there is a place named Naimisha, desired by the devarshis. There are sacred tirthas, holy to separate gods. The beautiful and holy Gomati flows here, frequented by devarshis. There is the sacrificial ground of the gods and Vivasvat's sacrificial site is here. Sacred Gaya, supreme among mountains and worshipped by rajarshis, is there. There is Brahma's sacred lake, frequented by rishis and the thirty gods. O tiger among men! It is for this reason that the ancient ones have declared that if one desires many sons, one should go to Gaya alone. O unblemished one! Mahanadi is there and also Gayashira. There is also a banyan tree, celebrated by the brahmanas as Akshayakarana.[334] O lord! The food that is given to the ancestors there, becomes inexhaustible. A great river named Phalgu

flows there and its waters are sacred. O bull among the Bharata lineage! There is also Koushiki, with many roots and fruit. Vishvamitra, rich in austerities, became a brahmana there. The sacred river Ganga is there. O son! Bhagiratha performed many sacrifices on its banks and gave away a lot of gifts.

'"O Kouravya! It is said that there is Utpala in Panchala. Koushika Vishvamitra[335] performed a sacrifice there with Shakra. On witnessing Vishvamitra's superhuman powers, Jamadagni's illustrious son recounted his lineage there.[336] In Kanyakubja,[337] Koushika drank *soma* with Indra and withdrawing himself from the kshatriya class, announced that he was a brahmana. O brave one! There is the confluence of the Ganga and the Yamuna, renowned in the world. It is pure and sacred, supreme among purifying places, and is visited by the sages. In earlier times, the grandfather,[338] the soul of all beings, performed a sacrifice there. O supreme among the Bharata lineage! That is the reason it has become famous as Prayaga.[339] O Indra among kings! O king! There is Agastya's supreme and great hermitage. There is the peak named Hiranyabindu on Kalanjara. O king! There is another mountain that is more pure and sacred than all other mountains. O Kouravya! This is the great-souled Bhargava's[340] Mahendra. O Kounteya! O Yudhishthira! In earlier times, the grandfather performed a sacrifice there and the sacred Bhagirathi was where the officiating priests were seated. O lord of the earth! The sacred and famous Brahmashala[341] is there. Its mere sight is pure and its banks are crowded by those whose sins have been cleansed. There is also the pure, auspicious, eternal, supreme and great hermitage of the great-souled Matanga, famous in the world by the name of Kedara. The beautiful Kundoda mountain has roots, fruits and water. The thirsty nishada[342] found water and shelter there. There is the beautiful grove of the gods there, adorned with ascetics. There are the rivers Bahuda and Nanda, on the peak of the mountain. O great king! I have recounted for you tirthas, rivers, mountains and sacred spots that are in the eastern direction. Now hear from me about sacred tirthas, rivers and mountains in the other three directions."'

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'Dhoumya said, "O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Now listen to the sacred tirthas in the southern direction. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! I will recount them in detail, to the best of my intelligence. In this direction is the sacred and auspicious river Godavari. It is pure, has many places to rest and a lot of water, and is frequented by ascetics. There are the rivers Venna and Bhimarathi, both capable of destroying the fear of sin. They are full of animals and birds and are adorned with the habitations of ascetics. O bull among the Bharata lineage! There is the river of rajarshi Nriga, lord of the earth. This is the Payoshni, with beautiful tirthas and a lot of water, and frequented

by brahmanas. The immensely ascetic and great yogi Markandeya sang the praises of Nriga's lineage here. We have heard that this really happened when Nriga performed a sacrifice. Indra became drunk with soma and brahmanas with their gifts. O best of the Bharata lineage! On Mount Varunasrotasa, there is the sacred and pure forest of Mathara, with many roots and fruit. This has a sacrificial stake. It is said that to the north of Praveni, there is Kanva's sacred hermitage and there are many forests inhabited by ascetics. O son! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Two sacrificial altars of the great-souled Jamadagni are in Shurparka—Pashana tirtha and Purashchandra. O Kounteya! In Martya, there is Ashoka tirtha, with many hermitages. O Yudhishthira! In Pandya, there are the tirthas known as Agasyta and Varuna. O bull among men! In Pandya, there is the sacred one known as Kumari.[343]

'"O Kounteya! Listen as I now recount Tamraparni.[344] The gods underwent austerities there, in a desire to attain greatness. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Gokarna is famous in the three worlds. O son! There is a lot of water there and the water is cool. It is sacred and auspicious. The lake is extremely difficult to access for men who have not purified their souls. Near that is the sacred hermitage of Agastya's disciple, on Mount Devasabha. It is full of fruits and roots and is known as Trinasomagni. There is Mount Vaidurya, auspicious and beautiful, and full of many gems. Agastya's hermitage is there, with a lot of roots, fruit and water. O lord of men! I will now describe the sacred spots, hermitages, rivers, mountains and lakes in Surashtra. O Yudhishthira! The brahmanas speak of Chamasonmajjana there and of Prabhasa tirtha on the sea, belonging to the thirty gods. There is the auspicious Pindaraka, visited by the ascetics and the great Mount Ujjayanta, which brings swift success. O Yudhishthira! Narada, foremost among devarshis, has recited an ancient shloka about this. Listen. 'He who torments his body with austerities in Ujjayanta, on auspicious Mount Surashtra, frequented by animals and birds, attains greatness in the vault of the sky.'[345] The sacred Dvaravati is there. The ancient god Madhusudana, who is the eternal dharma, dwells there in person. The brahmanas who are knowledgeable in the Vedas and those who are learned about the nature of the soul say that the great-souled Krishna is the eternal dharma. It is said that Govinda is supremely pure among all purifiers, most sacred among all things sacred and most auspicious among all things auspicious. Pundarikaksha, the eternal god of the gods in the three worlds, Hari whose soul cannot be contemplated and Madhusudana dwells there."'[346]

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'Dhoumya said, "I will now recount for you the sacred and purifying places that lie to the west, in Avanti. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! There is the sacred river Narmada that flows in a western direction. It has *priyangus*[347] and groves of mangoes

and groves of cane. The sage Vishrava's holy and famous habitation is there. The lord of riches, Kubera, who has a man as a mount, was born there.[348] There is a sacred and auspicious peak there, by the name of Vaiduryashikhara.[349] It abounds in green trees and there are divine flowers and fruit. O king! On the top of the peak there is the lake of a sage, with blooming lotuses and frequented by gods and gandharvas. O great king! Many wonders are to be seen on that mountain. That sacred and celestial place is always like heaven itself and is frequented by the devarshis. O destroyer of enemy cities! The rajarshi Vishvamitra's river is there and that sacred river known as Para has many lakes and holy tirthas. Nahusha's son Yayati fell on its banks, in the midst of righteous ones.[350] Though he fell, he again obtained the eternal words characterized by dharma. O son! There is also a sacred lake and Mount Mainaka. There is also Mount Asita, with many roots and fruit. O Yudhishthira! O Pandava! Kakshasena's sacred hermitage is there and also Chyavana's hermitage, famous everywhere. O lord! With a few austerities, men can obtain success there. O great king! There is also Jambumarga, the hermitage of rishis who have controlled their souls. O foremost among those who have pacified themselves! It is frequented by animals and birds. O king! O lord of the earth! There is Ketumala, which is most sacred and is always crowded by ascetics and Medhya and Gangaranya. There is the famous and sacred forest of Saindhava, frequented by brahmanas. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! There is the grandfather's[351] holy lake, by the name of Pushkara. This is the beloved hermitage of *vaikhanasas*,[352] siddhas and rishis. O best of the Kuru lineage! O supreme among those who have performed good deeds! Prajapati himself chanted this verse in praise of Pushkara. 'If a wise person desires to go to Pushkara even in his mind, all his sins are destroyed and he finds delight in the vault of the sky.'"'[353]

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'Dhoumya said, "O tiger among kings! I will now describe to you the sacred spots and purifying places in the northern direction. O Pandava! The sacred Sarasvati flows towards the ocean, with many pools[354] and adorned with groves. There is the immensely swift Yamuna. There is also the sacred and auspicious tirtha Plakshavatarana. After undertaking a sacrifice to Sarasvati, brahmanas performed their ablutions there. O unblemished one! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! There is the sacred, famous, divine and auspicious Agnishira. Sahadeva sacrificed there, after throwing the sacrificial peg.[355] O Yudhishthira! It is because of this reason that Indra chanted a verse, which is still prevalent in the world and is sung by brahmanas. 'The fires that Sahadeva lit along the Yamuna were one crore[356] and the gifts were hundreds of thousands.' It was there that King Bharata, the immensely famous emperor,

performed thirty-five horse sacrifices. O son! We have heard that Sarakasta, who satisfied the wishes of brahmanas in ancient times, has an extremely holy and famous hermitage there. O Partha! O great king! The river Sarasvati is always worshipped by those who are virtuous. In ancient times, the Valakhilya rishis performed sacrifices there. O Yudhishthira! The most sacred and famous Drishadvati is there. O lord of men! O supreme among the Bharata lineage! The immensely sacred Vaivarnya and Varna, learned in the Vedas, learned in the rites of the Vedas and wise in the knowledge that is in the Vedas, always performed many sacred sacrifices there.

'"In ancient times, many gods gathered in Vishakhayupa, with Indra and Varuna, and performed austerities, so that the spot became extremely sacred. There is also holy and lovely Palashaka, where the great rishi Lord Jamadagni, immensely fortunate and immensely famous, performed a sacrifice. All the best of rivers came in person to meet the supreme rishi, each bringing its own waters, and stood around in servitude. O great king! Vishvavasu himself went there and on witnessing the valour of that great-souled and brave one, chanted this shloka. 'When the great-souled Jamadagni sacrificed to the gods, all the rivers arrived and worshipped him with honey.' O Yudhishthira! The place where the supreme peak of the mountain was swiftly splintered by the Ganga in Gangadvara is made beautiful by gandharvas, yakshas, rakshasas and apsaras. It is the habitation of *kiratas*[357] and kinnaras. O king! This famous and sacred place is frequented by masses of brahmarshis. O Kouravya! Sanatkumara and sacred Kanakhala are there and the mountain named Puru, where Pururava was born. Bhrigu performed his austerities there, visited by masses of maharshis. O great king! That hermitage on the great mountain has become famous by the name of Bhrigutunga.

'"O bull among the Bharata lineage! The lord Vishnu Narayana is eternal and supreme among beings and is all that is, all that was and all that will be. His glorious, holy and extensive hermitage Badari is there, famous and renowned in the three worlds as a sacred place. Ganga, which carries warm waters, is different along Badari. O king! It carries cool waters laced with gold. The rishis and the gods always come and show their obeisance to the lord god Narayana, immensely fortunate and immensely energetic. O Partha! Where the supreme-souled eternal god Narayana dwells, the entire universe and all its tirthas are also there. He is sanctity. He is the supreme brahman. He is the tirtha. He is the hermitage of austerities. The devarshis, the siddhas and all the other ascetics also dwell there. Madhusudana is the original god, he is the great yogi. You should have no doubt that the place where he dwells is the most holy among all that is holy. O king! O lord of the earth! These are the sacred spots on the earth. O best of men! I have recounted the tirthas and purifying places. The Vasus, the Sadhyas, the Adityas, the Maruts, the Ashvins, and the great-souled rishis who know about the nature of the brahman, frequent these places. O Kounteya! If you go to these places with the bulls among the brahmanas and your immensely fortunate brothers, you will discard all

anxiety.”’

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Vaishampayana said, ‘O descendant of the Kourava lineage! While Dhoumya was speaking thus, the great and immensely energetic rishi Lomasha arrived. The king, who was the eldest of the Pandavas, his retinue and the brahmanas arose for the immensely fortunate one, just as the immortals arise in heaven for Shakra. Having worshipped him in accordance with what is prescribed, Dharmaraja Yudhishthira asked him the reason for his arrival and the reason for his travels.

‘Thus asked by Pandu’s son, the great-souled one was pleased and replied in soft words, delighting the Pandava. “O Kounteya! While I was travelling all the worlds according to my wishes, I went to Shakra’s residence and saw the lord of the gods there. I also saw your brave brother Savyasachi and was extremely astonished to see him share half of Shakra’s throne. O tiger among men! On my seeing Partha seated in that fashion, the king of the gods told me there, ‘Go to Pandu’s sons.’ Thus addressed, I have swiftly come to see you, with your younger brothers. I have come because of the words of Puruhuta[358] and the great-souled Partha. O son! O descendant of the Pandava lineage! I will tell you that which will bring you great delight. O king! Listen to my words, with your brothers and with Krishna. O bull among the Pandava lineage! On your words, the mighty-armed one went out for weapons. Partha has obtained from Rudra a great and unrivalled weapon. It is known as Brahmashira and Rudra obtained it after great austerities. That terrible weapon arose with the ambrosia[359] and Savyasachi has now obtained it, together with the mantras for withdrawing, repulsing and releasing it. O Yudhishthira! O descendant of the Kuru lineage! The infinitely powerful Partha has obtained other divine weapons too—like *vajra* and *danda*—from Yama, Kubera, Varuna and Indra. He has learnt from Vishvavasu’s son[360] singing, dancing, the chanting of *samas* and the playing of musical instruments, as is prescribed, according to the rules and according to the norms for learning. Thus Kounteya has become skilled in weapons and has learnt *gandharva veda*.[361] Bibhatsu, younger to your younger brother,[362] lives happily there. O Yudhishthira! I will now tell you the import of what the best of the gods told me for your sake. Listen to me. ‘There is no doubt that you will go the world of men. O supreme among brahmanas. Repeat these words of mine to Yudhishthira.[363] “Your younger brother Arjuna will swiftly return, after obtaining weapons, but after accomplishing a great task for the gods, which the gods themselves are incapable of. Together with your brothers, devote yourself to austerities. Austerities are supreme and there is nothing greater than austerities. O bull among the Bharata lineage! I know Karna exactly. In battle, he is not worth a sixteenth part of Partha. O destroyer of

enemies! I will dispel the fear that exists in your mind about him[364] when Savyasachi has returned. O brave one! You have a desire in your mind towards visiting the tirthas. There is no doubt that Lomasha will tell you everything about this. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Whatever the maharshi tells you about the fruits of austerities and tirthas should be accepted by you as the bringer of welfare. It should not be otherwise.”’”’[365]

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‘Lomasha said, “O Yudhishthira! Now listen to what Dhananjaya has said. ‘O one rich in austerities![366] Make my brother Yudhishthira devote himself to the prosperity dharma brings. You know about the supreme dharma and about austerities. You also know about the eternal dharma that brings prosperity to kings. You also know about other supreme things through which men are purified. Therefore, bestow on the Pandava the merits that come through tirthas. Act with your entire mind in a way such that the king visits tirthas and gives away cattle there.’ This is what Vijaya[367] told me. ‘Protected by you, let him go to all the tirthas. You should protect him from rakshasas in difficult and uneven terrain. O supreme among brahmanas! Just as Dadhicha protected Indra of the gods and Angiras the sun,[368] protect the Kounteyas from rakshasas. There are many evil rakshasas who are the equal of mountains. If you protect the Kounteyas, they will not be able to attack them.’ On Indra’s word and appointed by Arjuna, I will travel with you and protect you from fear. O descendant of the Kuru lineage! I have visited the tirthas twice earlier. With you, I will visit them for the third time. O Yudhishthira! O great king! Manu and other rajarshis, the performers of good deeds, have visited the tirthas, the dispellers of all fear. O Kouravya! Liars, those whose souls are not controlled, ignorant ones and the performers of evil acts do not bathe in tirthas, nor do men whose minds are crooked. But your mind has always been devoted to dharma. You are always learned in dharma, you are devoted to the truth. There is no doubt that you will be freed from all that is evil. O Kounteya! O Pandava! You will become like King Bhagiratha, like King Gaya and like Yayati.”

‘Yudhishthira replied, “I am so overcome with delight that I cannot find words to answer. There is no one greater than one whom the king of gods remembers. Who can be greater than one who has your company, whose brother is Dhananjaya and who is remembered by Vasava? O lord! You have spoken to me about visiting the tirthas. I had already made up my mind, after Dhoumya’s words. O brahmana! Whenever you make up your mind about visiting the tirthas, it is my certain resolution that I will also go to the tirthas.”’

Vaishampayana said, ‘Lomasha then spoke to the Pandava, who had already made up his mind. “O great king! Travel light. If you travel light, it will be easier to go.”

‘Yudhishthira replied, “Let the brahmanas and ascetics who live on alms return, and the citizens who have followed me out of loyalty for their king. Let them go to the great king Dhritarashtra. In due time, he will give them their due allowances, those that they have been used to. If that lord of men does not give it, out of affection for us and to ensure our welfare, Panchala[369] will give it.”’

Vaishampayana said, ‘Burdened with great grief, the citizens left for the city of the elephant,[370] as did the brahmanas and the ascetics. Out of love for Dharmaraja, the king who was Ambika’s son[371] received them and gave them riches in the prescribed way. The king who was Kunti’s son lived happily in Kamyaka for three nights, with Lomasha and a few brahmanas.’

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Vaishampayana said, ‘O king! On seeing that Kounteya was about to leave, the brahmanas who still resided in the forest went to him and spoke to him. “O king! You are going to the sacred tirthas with your brothers and with the great-souled devarshi Lomasha. O great king! O Pandava! O Kourava! Please take us with you. Without you, we will never be able to visit them. O lord of men! They are uneven and difficult of access and are frequented by predatory beasts. Men in small groups cannot go to those tirthas. Your brothers are brave and are always skilled in the use of bows. Under the protection of you valiant ones, we will be able to go there. O protector of the earth! O lord of the earth! Through your favours, we will also obtain the auspicious fruits of tirthas and vows. O king! Protected by your prowess, we will become pure by bathing in those tirthas and cleansed of sin by visiting those tirthas. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! By bathing in those tirthas, you will also obtain the rare worlds obtained by King Kartavirya, rajarshi Ashtaka, Lomapada and the brave king and emperor, Bharata. O lord of the earth! We wish to go with you and see Prabhasa and the other tirthas, mountains like Mahendra, rivers like Ganga and giant trees like Plaksha. O lord of men! If you have any love for brahmanas, then swiftly do what we are asking you to. This will bring about your welfare. O mighty-armed one! The tirthas are infested by rakshasas, who always bring impediments in the way of austerities. Protect us from them. O lord of men! Visit the tirthas that have been described by Dhoumya, the wise Narada and the great ascetic devarshi Lomasha. Visit them all in the prescribed way. Protected by Lomasha and accompanied by us, be cleansed of all sin.” Having been thus worshipped by them, his eyes filled with tears of joy.

‘The bull among the Pandavas was surrounded by Bhimasena and his other brothers. He told all the rishis, “So shall it be.” With Lomasha’s permission and that of the priest Dhoumya’s, the best of the Pandavas, self-controlled, made up his mind to leave, with his brothers and with Droupadi, unblemished of form. At that time, the immensely

fortunate Vyasa, Narada and Parvata, all of them extremely intelligent, appeared before the Pandava in Kamyaka, desirious of seeing him. King Yudhishthira worshipped them in accordance with the proper rites. When they had been worshipped, the immensely fortunate ones spoke to Yudhishthira. “O Yudhishthira! O twins! O Bhima! Banish all that is evil from your minds. Be clean and pure and go to the tirthas. The brahmanas have said that control of the body is the vow for humans. The brahmanas say that purification of the mind and the intelligence is the vow for gods. O lord of men! A mind that is clean is enough for brave ones. Therefore, bear friendship in your minds and purified, go to the tirthas. Use your mental powers to purify and control your bodies through vows. Resort to the vows of the gods and you will obtain the fruits that have been recounted.” The Pandavas and Krishna promised that it would be this way. Their journey was blessed by all the sages, divine and human. O Indra among kings! They then touched Lomasha’s feet and those of Dvaipayana, Narada and devarshi Parvata. Accompanied by Dhoumya and other denizens of the forest, the brave ones departed when the full moon night of Margashirsha[372] was over and Pushya[373] was in the ascendant. They were attired in tough bark and deerskin. Their hair was matted. Clad in impenetrable armour, they set out to visit the tirthas. They were accompanied by Indrasena and the other servants and had fourteen chariots. There were other attendants in charge of the food. O Janamejaya! With weapons, with swords tied and with quivers and arrows, the brave Pandavas set out, their faces towards the east.’

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‘Yudhishthira said, “O supreme among devarshis! I do not think myself to be without qualities. But yet I am tormented by miseries, like no other king. O Lomasha! I think that my enemies do not possess any qualities. Nor do they follow dharma. Why do they then prosper in this world?”

‘Lomasha replied, “O king! O Partha! You should never grieve that those who do not follow dharma achieve prosperity because they do not follow dharma. A man may be seen to prosper, attain fortune and triumph over his enemies, though he does not follow dharma, but will be destroyed, down to his roots. O lord of the earth! I have seen many daityas and danavas prosper, though they do not follow dharma. But decay finally overcomes them. O lord! I have witnessed all this earlier, in the era of the gods. The gods found delight in dharma, but the asuras gave up dharma. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The gods visited the tirthas, but the asuras did not. As a result of not following dharma, they were first filled with insolence. Insolence gave birth to vanity and vanity gave birth to anger. Anger resulted in a lack of shame and shamelessness destroyed their conduct. Because of their shamelessness, because of their lack of modesty, because of their evil conduct and because of their worthless vows, forgiveness, prosperity and dharma soon abandoned them. O king! Prosperity went to the gods and

ill fortune went to the asuras. When ill fortune overwhelmed them, they lost their senses because of insolence. Dissension possessed the daityas and the danavas. O Kounteya! Overwhelmed by ill fortune and dissension and overtaken by insolence, the danavas lost all their rites and intelligence. Overwhelmed by insolence, they soon confronted destruction. Overcome by infamy, the daityas were soon completely destroyed. But the gods went to oceans, rivers and lakes. They followed dharma and visited other purifying places. O Pandava! They observed austerities and sacrifices and gave gifts and benedictions. They discarded all sin and ensured their welfare. Thus, they were generous and always observed rites. They went to the tirthas. Therefore, they obtained supreme prosperity. O Indra among kings! Like that, you will also bathe in the tirthas with your younger brothers. You will also regain prosperity. That is the eternal path. O lord of the earth! Just as King Nriga, Shibi and Oushinara, Bhagiratha, Vasumana, Gaya, Puru and Pururava were purified, through always observing austerities, touching water and visiting tirthas and seeing great-souled ones, you will also obtain fame and pure riches. O Indra among kings! Like that, you will also obtain great prosperity. Like Ikshvaku with his sons, subjects and relatives, like Muchukunda, Mandhata and King Marutta obtained pure fame, like the gods with their power of austerities, like the devarshis, you will also obtain it. But the sons of Dhritarashtra are enslaved by insolence and delusion. There is no doubt that they will soon be destroyed like the daityas.'"

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Vaishampayana said, 'O protector of the earth! Then those heroes, with the others,[374] lived here and there, and eventually arrived at the Naimisha forest. O king! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The Pandavas performed their ablutions at the sacred tirtha of Gomati and donated cattle and riches. The Kouravas repeatedly satisfied the gods, the ancestors and the brahmanas at Kanya tirtha, Ashva tirtha[375] and Gava tirtha.[376] O lord of the earth! After staying in Valakoti on Mount Vrishaprastha, all the Pandavas bathed in Bahuda. O lord of the earth! They offered sacrifices to the gods in Prayaga, the sacrificial ground of the gods. Devoted to the truth, they cleaned their bodies and performed supreme austerities at the confluence of the Ganga and the Yamuna. Having been cleansed of sin, those great-souled ones gave a lot of riches to brahmanas. O king! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Together with the brahmanas, those sons of Pandu then went to Prajapati's[377] altar, frequented by ascetics. The brave ones lived there, performing supreme austerities. They always satisfied the brahmanas with offerings obtained from the forest. They then went to Mahidhara, worshipped by rajarshi Gaya, unrivalled in radiance, learned in dharma and the performer of pure deeds. The lake Gayashira is there and the sacred Mahanadi. The extremely sacred and supreme Brahmasara[378] is there, frequented by rishis. There the illustrious Agastya

went to Vaivasvata.[379] O king! That is where eternal Dharma himself lived. O lord of the earth! All the rivers originate from there. That is where Mahadeva, the wielder of the *pinaka*, is always present.[380] The great Akshayavata is there and the Pandavas performed *chaturmasya*[381] and the great sacrifice of the rishis there. Hundreds of brahmanas, rich in austerities, came there and performed the chaturmasya sacrifice in accordance with the rites laid down by the rishis. The learned brahmanas, learned in the Vedas and always devoted to austerities, talked about sacred accounts, while they were seated in the sacrificial ground of those great-souled ones.

'O king! There was a brahmana named Shamatha. He was learned and immersed in vows and celibate. He spoke about Gaya, the son of Amurtarayas. "O descendant of the Bharata lineage![382] Gaya, the son of Amurtarayas, is supreme among rajarshis. Listen to me as I recount his virtuous deeds. O king! His sacrifice had a lot of food and a lot of stipends. There were mountains of food, in hundreds and thousands. There were several hundred rivers of ghee and curd. There were thousands of flows of rich condiments. O king! Day after day, they were given to those who asked for them. The brahmanas ate special food that was cooked well. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! When the time came for distributing gifts, the sound of the brahman rose up to heaven. Nothing could be heard but for the sound of the brahman. O king! The sacred sound travelled through the earth, the sky and the firmament and filled them and it was extraordinary. O bull among the Bharata lineage! Satisfied with the pure food and drink, men sung a verse that radiated in every region. 'Who is there among beings who still wishes to eat at Gaya's sacrifice? There are still twenty-five mountains of food left. No men earlier, nor men hereafter, will do what the immensely radiant rajarshi Gaya did at this sacrifice. The gods have been extremely satisfied by the offerings tendered by Gaya. They will never be able to accept anything offered by others.' O descendant of the Kuru lineage! Many such verses were sung at the sacrifice of the great-souled one, near the banks of the lake."'

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Vaishampayana said, 'Then King Kounteya, the giver of many gifts, departed. He went to Agastya's hermitage and lived in Durjaya. The king asked Lomasha, supreme among eloquent ones, "Why was Vatapi immolated by Agastya here? What was the power of that daitya, killer of humans? What excited the anger of that great-souled one?"

'Lomasha replied, "O descendant of the Kourava lineage! There was once a daitya named Ilvala. In earlier times, he lived in the city of Manimati and Vatapi was his younger brother. That son of Diti once spoke to a brahmana who had the power of austerities. 'O illustrious one! Grant me a son who is Indra's equal.' Since the brahmana did not give him a son who was Vasava's equal, the asura became extremely angry with

the brahmana. If he[383] summoned with his words anyone who had gone to Vaivasvata's[384] world, that person would regain his body and be seen to be alive. He changed the asura Vatapi and cooked him well. He fed this to the brahmana and summoned him[385] back. O lord of the earth! O king! The great asura Vatapi smilingly ripped the brahmana's side apart and emerged. O king! He thus fed brahmanas again and again. The evil-minded daitya Ilvala caused violence to them.

'"At that time, the illustrious Agastya saw his ancestors hanging in a cave, with their faces downwards. He asked them, 'Why are you hanging upside down like this?' The ones learned in the nature of the brahman replied, 'For the sake of offspring.' They told him, 'We are your ancestors. We have reached this cave and are hanging upside down for the sake of offspring. O Agastya! If you give birth to excellent offspring for our sake, we will be freed from this hell. O son! You will also attain the supreme objective.' The energetic one, always devoted to the dharma of truth, told them, 'O forefathers! I will do what you desire. Remove the fever from your minds.' Then the illustrious rishi began to think about offspring. He could not see a fit enough lady in whom he could procreate himself.[386] He then chose those limbs from different beings that are regarded as unsurpassed. Collecting those limbs, he created a supreme woman. Having created her for himself, the immensely ascetic sage gave her to the king of Vidarbha, who was desirous of offspring.[387] The immensely fortunate one was born there, as radiant as lightning. She grew and her face was beautiful, her body was handsome. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! As soon as she was born, on seeing her, the king of Vidarbha was delighted and announced this to the brahmanas. O lord of the earth! All those brahmanas blessed her. The brahmanas gave her the name of Lopamudra. O great king! She grew up and her beauty was supreme. She swiftly grew, like a lotus in the water, or the auspicious crest of a fire. O Indra among kings! When she attained her youth, one hundred maidens adorned with ornaments and one hundred female servants served the beautiful one, attending to her instructions. O lord! Surrounded by the one hundred female servants and in the midst of the one hundred maidens, that energetic maiden blazed like Rohini[388] in the sky. When she attained her youth, though she was good in conduct and manners, no man asked for her hand, out of fear for the great-souled one.[389] The truthful maiden surpassed the apsaras in her beauty. She satisfied her father and her relatives with her good conduct. On seeing that Vidarbha's daughter was accomplished and had attained her youth, the father began to think in his mind, 'To whom shall I give my daughter?'"'

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'Lomasha said, "When Agastya thought that she had become capable of leading a

householder's life, he went to Vidarbha, lord of the earth and said, 'O king! I have decided to be a householder for the sake of a son. O lord of the earth! I am asking for Lopamudra. Bestow her on me.' Having been thus addressed by the sage, the lord of the earth lost his senses. He was incapable of refusing and he was unwilling to give. The lord of the earth went to his wife and told her, 'The maharshi is full of valour. If angered, the flames of his curse will consume us.' At that time, on seeing the lord of the earth and his wife thus miserable, Lopamudra went to them and spoke these words. 'O lord of the earth! You should not be miserable on my account. O father! Bestow me on Agastya and save yourself.' O lord of the earth! On hearing his daughter's words, the king bestowed Lopamudra, in accordance with the appropriate rites, on the great-souled Agastya.

'"Having obtained Lopamudra as his wife, Agastya told her, 'Throw away those expensive garments and ornaments.' The long-eyed one's thighs were like those of Rambha.[390] The garments were beautiful to see, expensive and fine. But at that, she discarded them. She donned bark and skins and rags. The long-eyed one became an equal in her vows. On going to Gangadvara, together with the wife who was devoted to him, the illustrious one, supreme among rishis, undertook severe austerities. She then served her husband with love and respect. The illustrious Agastya also exhibited great affection towards his wife. O lord of the earth! Thus, a lot of time passed. One day, the illustrious rishi saw Lopamudra after a bath. She was radiant in her austerities. He was pleased with her servitude, her purity and her self-control. He was pleased with her loveliness and her beauty and summoned her for intercourse.

'"Then the beautiful one joined her hands in salutation, and as if in shame, spoke these words of love to the illustrious one. 'There is no doubt that a husband marries a wife for the sake of offspring. O rishi! But you should act towards me in accordance with the love I bear towards you. O brahmana! You should come to me on a bed like the bed in my father's house, in his palace. I desire that you should be garlanded and adorned in ornaments. I wish to be adorned in divine ornaments that please me.' Agastya replied, 'O Lopamudra! O one with the beautiful waist! O fortunate one! I do not possess riches that are equal to those of your father.' Lopamudra said, 'O great lord! In an instant, through your austerities, you can bring all the riches that can be found in the world of the living.' Agastya replied, 'What you say is true. But that will fritter away my austerities. Ask me to do that which will not waste my austerities.' Lopamudra said, 'O one rich in austerities! Only a little bit of my season is left. I do not wish to come to you in any other way. O one rich in austerities! I do not wish your dharma to be destroyed in any way. You should therefore do what I desire, while taking care of that.' Agastya replied, 'O fortunate one! O beautiful one! Your mind has decided in accordance with your desire. I will go. Stay here according to your wishes.'"'

'Lomasha said, "O Kouravya! Knowing that King Shrutarvana had riches greater than those of any other king, Agastya went to him to beg for riches. Having heard of the arrival of the one who had been born in a pot,[391] the king went out with his advisers to the borders of his kingdom, to receive him with great respect. After having offered gifts to the guest in the prescribed manner, the king joined his hands in salutation and respectfully asked him about the reason for his arrival. Agastya said, 'O lord of the earth! Know that I have come to you for riches. According to your capacity, give me a share, without taking away from others.' Giving him a complete account of his income and expenditure, the king replied, 'Now that you know, take from me whatever riches you desire.' The brahmana looked on both sides impartially. On seeing that the income was equal to the expenditure, he thought that if he took anything away, he would cause oppression to beings.

'"Therefore, taking Shrutarvana with him, he went to Vadhryashva. He received them at the borders of his kingdom, in accordance with the prescribed rites. Vadhryashva offered them the gifts due to guests and water for washing the feet, and with their permission, asked them the reason for their arrival. Agastya said, 'O lord of the earth! Know that we have come to you with a desire for riches. According to your capacity, give us a share, without taking away from others.' Then the king gave them a complete account of his income and expenditure and said, 'Now that you know, take whatever is left.' The brahmana looked on both sides impartially. On seeing that the income was equal to the expenditure, he thought that if he took anything away, he would cause oppression to beings. Then the three of them—Agastya, Shrutarvana and King Vadhryashva—went to Purukutsa's son Trasadasyu, the possessor of great riches. O great king! On hearing of their arrival, Trasadasyu received them, together with his mounts, at the borders of his kingdom, in the prescribed manner. The supreme of kings from the Ikshvaku lineage showed them his respects in the appropriate fashion. When they were comfortable, he asked them the reason for their arrival. Agastya said, 'O lord of the earth! Know that we have come to you with a desire for riches. According to your capacity, give us a share, without taking away from others.' The king gave them a complete account of his income and expenditure and said, 'Now that you know, take whatever is left.' The brahmana looked on both sides impartially. On seeing that the income was equal to the expenditure, he thought that if he took anything away, he would cause oppression to beings. O great king! Then all those kings looked at one another. Together, they spoke to the great sage, 'O brahmana! There is a rich danava named Ilvala on earth. Let us all go to him now and ask for riches.' O king! The thought of asking riches from Ilvala seemed to them to be a proper one. So they went to Ilvala together."'

'Lomasha said, "Having heard that the maharshi had arrived with the kings at the borders of his kingdom, Ilvala went out with his advisers, to show them his respects. O Kouravya! The best of asuras offered them his hospitality. He then cooked his brother Vatapi well. On seeing that the great asura Vatapi had been cooked as meat, all the rajarshis were miserable and lost their senses. But Agastya, supreme among rishis, told the rajarshis, 'You should not act out of despondence. I will eat up the great asura.' Then the great rishi seated himself on the best seat. Ilvala, king of the daityas, smilingly served him. Agastya then ate up all of Vatapi. When the eating was over, the asura Ilvala summoned him.[392] O son! But the great-souled Agastya only belched.[393] On seeing that the great asura had been digested, Ilvala was distressed. He joined his hands in salutation, and together with his advisers, asked, 'Why have you come? Tell me what I can do for you.' At that, Agastya smiled and replied, 'O asura! We know your powers and that you are the lord of all riches. These ones are not that rich and my need for riches is great. Give us a share according to your capacity, but without taking away from others.' At that, Ilvala bowed in obeisance before the rishi and told him, 'If you know what I intend to give you, I will give you those riches.' Agastya replied, 'O asura! You intend to give the kings ten thousand cows each. O great asura! You wish to give them that much of gold. You wish to give me twice that much and a golden chariot. O great asura! You wish to give me two steeds with the speed of thought. Go and ask and you will find that the chariot is made of gold.' O Kounteya! On asking, it was found that the chariot was indeed made of gold. Miserably, the daitya gave them a lot of riches. The horses Vivaja and Suvaja were yoked to the chariot. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! In the twinkling of an eye, all those riches were carried to Agastya's hermitage.

'"Agastya gave the rajarshis permission to leave. Then the sage did all that Lopamudra had desired. Lopamudra said, 'O illustrious one! You have done everything that I had desired. Now beget on me a son who is supreme in valour.' Agastya replied, 'O fortunate one! O beautiful one! I am pleased with your conduct. Listen as I tell you what I am thinking about the offspring. You can have a thousand sons, or a hundred equal to ten each, or ten equal to a hundred each, or one equal to a thousand.' Lopamudra said, 'O one rich in austerities! Let me have one son who is equal to one thousand. One learned and virtuous son is superior to many who are not righteous.' The sage promised that it would be that way. At the right time, he faithfully united with his wife, who was his equal in conduct and devotion. When the embryo had been conceived, he went away to the forest. When he had left for the forest, the embryo developed for seven autumns. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! When the seventh year had passed, an immensely wise son was born. He blazed in his powers and his name was Dridhasyu. That great and energetic rishi became that rishi's[394] son. The immensely

famous one issued forth, as if reciting the Vedas and the Upanishads and their branches. Even as a child, that energetic one used to carry loads of kindling in his father's house and thus came to have the name of Idhmavaha.[395] On seeing him thus endowed, the sage was delighted. O king! Thus did the ancestors obtain the worlds they desired. This is Agastya's famous hermitage, adorned everywhere with flowers. This is where Vatapi of Prahrada's lineage was destroyed by Agastya. O king! His hermitage is beautiful and possesses all the qualities. You should bathe as you wish in this sacred Bhagirathi."'

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'Yudhishthira said, "O supreme among brahmanas! I wish to hear about that wise maharshi. Tell me in detail about Agastya's deeds."

'Lomasha replied, "O king! O great king! Then listen to his divine, extraordinary and superhuman account, Agastya's powers and his infinite soul. In Krita yuga,[396] there were some terrible danavas, invincible in battle. There were masses of them, famous as the Kaleyas, and they were extremely terrible. Arming themselves with many upraised weapons, they placed themselves under Vritra. They pursued the gods, led by the great Indra, everywhere. In ancient times, the thirty gods decided to act so that Vritra might be killed. Placing Purandara[397] at the forefront, they approached Brahma. On seeing all of them, their hands joined in salutation, Parameshthi[398] said, 'O gods! I know the task that all of you wish to undertake. I will tell you the means whereby you can ensure Vritra's killing. There is a famous, great and wise rishi by the name of Dadhicha. Together, go to him and ask him for a boon. The one with dharma in his soul and virtue in his mind will happily grant it to you. If you wish for victory, all of you must tell him these words. "For the welfare of the three worlds, give us your bones." He will give up his body and give his bones to you. With those bones, fashion the firm and greatly terrible vajra. It will be large, capable of killing enemies. It will be sharp and will have six sides. It will make a terrible sound. With that vajra, Shatakratu will kill Vritra. I have told you everything. Do this without delay.' Having been thus addressed, the gods took their leave of the grandfather.

'"With Narayana at the forefront, they went to Dadhicha's hermitage. It was on the other bank of the Sarasvati and covered with many trees and creepers. It resounded with the sound of bees, as if they were chanting sama hymns. This mixed with the sound of male cuckoos and was alive with the noise of *chakora*[399] birds. Buffaloes, boars, swamp deer and yaks roamed everywhere, without the fear of tigers. Male elephants, with juices flowing down their burst temples, sported with female ones in the ponds and thundered in every direction. The place echoed with the giant roars of lions and tigers. There were others that were hidden in caves and caverns. The place was extremely beautifully adorned with these and was like heaven. It was to this hermitage of

Dadhicha's that the thirty gods went.

'"They saw Dadhicha there, as radiant as the sun. His beauty was resplendent, like the grandfather with Lakshmi. O king! The gods bowed in obeisance at his feet and saluted him. Then all of them asked for the boon, as Parameshthi had asked them to. At this, Dadhicha was extremely delighted. He addressed the supreme gods and said, 'O gods! I will act today for your welfare. For your sake, I will myself give up my body.' Having spoken thus, that best of men, in control of his breath of life, gave up his life. As they had been instructed, the gods collected the bones of the dead one. Delighted at the prospect of victory, the gods went to Tvashtar[400] and spoke to him. On hearing their words, Tvashtar was happy and began to work, carefully and diligently. He created the vajra, extremely terrible in appearance. Having constructed it, he happily told Shakra, 'O god! This vajra, the best of weapons, will today reduce to ashes the terrible enemies of the gods. Therefore, kill the enemy and having done that, happily live in heaven with your companions.' Having been thus addressed by Tvashtar, Purandara cheerfully and respectfully accepted the vajra."'

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'Lomasha said, "Then the wielder of the vajra, protected by the strength of the gods, attacked Vritra, who had then covered heaven and earth.[401] He was protected on all sides by the gigantic Kalakeyas. With their upraised weapons, they looked like mountains with peaks. O best of the Bharata lineage! In an instant, a great battle, terrorising the worlds, began between the gods and the danavas. Upraised swords clashed, wielded by the arms of warriors and directed at each other's bodies, creating a great sound. O lord of the earth! Heads descended from the sky onto the ground and looked like palm fruit loosened from their stalks. Clad in golden armour and armed with maces, the Kaleyas[402] rushed at the thirty gods, like mountains on fire. Unable to withstand the force of this onslaught, the thirty gods broke their ranks and fled in fear. On seeing them fly in fear and Vritra increasing in power, the thousand-eyed Purandara was greatly overcome by fear. On seeing Shakra afflicted with fear, the eternal Vishnu increased his strength by giving him a share of his own energy. Having seen Shakra thus protected by Vishnu, all the masses of gods and the unblemished brahmarshis gave him their own energy. Thus empowered by Vishnu, the gods and the immensely fortunate rishis, Shakra increased in strength. On knowing that the lord of the thirty gods had been strengthened, Vritra let out giant roars. The earth, the directions, the sky, heaven and all the mountains began to tremble at this roar.

'"On hearing that terrible and great roar, the great Indra was struck with extreme grief. O king! Immersed in fear, he swiftly unleashed the great vajra, so as to kill him. Struck by Shakra's vajra, the giant asura, wearing a golden garland, fell down, like the

giant mountain Mandara in ancient times, when released from Vishnu's hand.[403] The supreme daitya was killed. But out of fear, Shakra fled and sought refuge in a lake.[404] In his fear, he refused to believe that his hand had released the vajra. In his fear, he refused to believe that Vritra was dead. All the gods were happy and delighted. The maharshis chanted Indra's praises. The gods assembled together and swiftly began to kill all the daityas, who were tormented at Vritra's death. They were killed by the thirty gods. In their fear, they entered the waves of the ocean and the infinite depths of the ocean, frequented by large fishes and full of gems. There they plotted and conspired about the destruction of the three worlds. Some smiled. Others were wise in suggesting courses of action, each according to his inclination. In due course of time, they arrived at the terrible decision that the first act should be to destroy all virtuous and learned ones and those who were ascetics. 'All the worlds are supported by austerities. Therefore, austerities must swiftly be destroyed. Whatever virtuous ones exist on earth, ascetics, knowledgeable in dharma and wise, their slaughter must swiftly be ensured. When they are destroyed, the world will be destroyed.' Having thus arrived at this decision of destroying the world, all of them were extremely happy. Varuna's abode was full of jewels. They made it their citadel, among the giant waves."'

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'Lomasha said, "When they had sought refuge in the ocean that was Varuna's abode, the Kaleyas began to act for the destruction of the three worlds. In their wrath, in the night, they always devoured sages and virtuous ones in hermitages and sacred places. In Vasishtha's hermitage, the evil-souled ones devoured one hundred and eighty-eight brahmanas and nine other ascetics. On going to Chyavana's sacred hermitage, frequented by brahmanas, they devoured one hundred sages who lived on fruit and roots. They thus acted during the night. During the day, they entered the ocean. In Bharadvaja's hermitage, they destroyed twenty brahmacharis who lived on air and water. In this way, one after another, the danavas destroyed all the hermitages. Intoxicated by the strength of their arms and overcome by destiny, the Kaleyas chased and killed many masses of brahmanas in the night. O supreme among men! Nevertheless, though the daityas acted in this way towards hermits and ascetics, men did not know this. In the morning, the bodies of sages, emaciated from restrained diets, would be seen, lifeless on the ground. The earth was full of bodies without flesh, without blood, without marrow and without entrails, with masses of bones strewn like conch shells. The earth was covered with broken sacrificial pots and ladles and the remains of agnihotra sacrifices. Oppressed by the fear of the Kaleyas, the world lost all enterprise. Studying of the Vedas and the uttering of exclamations at the time of making oblations ceased. Sacrifices and rituals were destroyed.

'"O lord of men! When men began to decay in this fashion, they were scared and in an attempt to save themselves, fled in all the directions. Some entered caves and others hid behind waterfalls. Still others were so anxious about death that they lost their lives out of fear. There were those who were brave and great archers. In great pride and with great care, they tried to hunt down the danavas. But they could not find them, because they had sought shelter in the ocean. Failing to find them, they were destroyed because of the exhaustion. O lord of men! The world neared destruction and all sacrifices and rituals were destroyed. The thirty gods were extremely distressed. With the great Indra, they assembled and consulted each other out of fear. They worshipped the unvanquished Vaikuntha[405] Narayana and sought refuge with him. Then the assembled gods spoke to Madhusudana, 'O lord! You are the creator, the sustainer and the protector. You are the world. You are the creator of everything, with limbs and without limbs.[406] O lotus-eyed one! In earlier times, when the earth was destroyed, for the welfare of the world, you raised it up, in the form of a boar.[407] O supreme among beings! In ancient times, you destroyed the extremely valorous and ancient daitya Hiranyakashipu in the form of *narasimha*.[408] The great asura Bali was incapable of being killed by all beings. In the form of a dwarf, you expelled him from the three worlds.[409] The asura who was a great archer was famous by the name of Jambha.[410] He was cruel and the obstructor of sacrifices and you ensured his destruction. Such are your deeds and they are too many to count. O Madhusudana! We are scared and frightened and you are our refuge. O god! O lord of the gods! It is for this reason and for the welfare of the world that we are bringing this to your notice. Protect the worlds, the gods and Shakra from this great fear.'"'

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'"The gods said, 'All the four types of beings[411] prosper because of these favours. Having prospered, they prosper the denizens of heaven through oblations.[412] Thus the different worlds prosper, each depending on the other. Through your favours, they are free from anxiety and are protected. Now this supreme fear has overtaken the worlds. We do not know who kills the brahmanas in the night. If the brahmanas decay, the earth will also decay. If the earth decays, heaven will also decay. O mighty-armed one! O lord of the universe! Through your favours, protect all the worlds, so that they do not advance towards their destruction.'

'"Vishnu replied, 'O gods! I know everything about the reasons behind the decay of beings. I shall tell you everything. Listen and be free of your fever. There is a famous class of extremely terrible Kaleyas. Having sought refuge with Vritra, they oppressed the entire universe. On seeing Vritra killed by the wise one with the thousand eyes,[413] they

have entered Varuna's abode, so as to save their lives. Having entered the terrible ocean, infested with crocodiles and sharks, they kill the sages by night, with the intention of destroying the worlds. But they cannot be destroyed, since they have sought refuge in the ocean. You should therefore set your minds on destroying the ocean. But except Agastya, who is capable of drying up the ocean?'"

'Lomasha said, "On hearing Vishnu's words about drying up the ocean, the gods took Parameshthi's[414] leave and went to Agastya's hermitage. There they saw Varuna's great-souled son blazing in his energy. He was being worshipped by the rishis, just as the grandfather is by the gods. Going to the great-souled and undecaying son of Mitra and Varuna, seated in his hermitage among the mass of his austere deeds, the gods recited his praises. The gods said, 'In ancient times, you were the refuge of the worlds when they were oppressed by Nahusha. For the welfare of the worlds, this thorn of the worlds was removed as the lord of the gods.[415] Vindhya, supreme among mountains, was angry with the sun and suddenly began to increase its height. But because it could not ignore your instructions, the mountain ceased to grow. When world was covered with darkness, all the subjects were oppressed because of their fear of death. But having obtained you as a protector, they attained the supreme objective. O illustrious one! Whenever we have been scared and frightened, you have always been our refuge. Therefore, we distressed ones are asking you for a boon. You are the granter of boons.'"'

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'Yudhishthira asked, "O great sage! Why was Vindhya angered and why did he suddenly begin to grow? I wish to hear about this in great detail."

'Lomasha replied, "At the time of rising and at the time of setting, the sun used to circumambulate the great mountain Meru, the golden king of mountains. On seeing this, Mount Vindhya told Surya, 'O Bhaskara![416] You always go around Meru. Circumambulate me in the same way.' Having been thus addressed, Surya replied to the king of the mountains, 'O mountain! I do not circumambulate him out of my own desires. He who created the universe has assigned this path for me.' Having been thus addressed, the mountain was angered and suddenly began to increase. O scorcher of enemies! He sought to obstruct the paths of the sun and the moon. Then all the gods assembled and, with Indra, went to Vindhya, the great king of the mountains. They tried to restrain him from what he was doing, but he paid no attention to their words. Then the gods went to the sage Agastya, the ascetic who was supreme among those who followed dharma and radiant in his valour, in his hermitage. The gods told him everything. The gods said, 'Consumed and overcome by anger, Vindhya, king of the mountains, is obstructing the paths of the sun, the moon and the nakshatras. O supreme among brahmanas! No one except you is capable of restraining him. O immensely

fortunate one! Therefore, restrain him.' On hearing the words of the gods, the brahmana went to the mountain.

'"He went to Vindhya with his wife and told him, 'O supreme among mountains! I wish that you should create a path for me. I have to go in a southern direction for some work. O Indra among mountains! Restrain yourself until I return from there and you can then grow as much as you wish.' O destroyer of enemies! Having made this agreement with Vindhya, Varuna's son went towards the southern direction and has not returned till this day. Just as you asked me to, I have told you everything about why Vindhya does not increase, because of Agastya's powers.

'"O king! Now listen and I will tell you how the Kaleyas were destroyed by all the gods, once they had obtained a boon from Agastya. Having heard the words of the thirty gods, Mitra and Varuna's son asked, 'Why have you come? What boon do you wish from me?' Having been thus addressed, the gods spoke these words to the sage. 'O great-souled one! O maharshi! We desire that you should act so as to drink up the great ocean. We will then be able to kill those enemies of the gods, the Kaleyas, with all their relatives.' Having heard the words of the thirty gods, the sage said, 'For the sake of the great happiness of the worlds, I will do what you desire.' Having said this, the one who was rigid in his vows, went to the ocean, the lord of the rivers, with the gods and the rishis who were successful in their austerities. Men, nagas, gandharvas, yakshas and *kimpurushas*[417] followed the great-souled one, in a desire to witness the extraordinary feat. All of them went to the ocean, which was thunderous in its roar. It seemed to be dancing with the waves that leapt up at the wind. It seemed to laugh with its foam, as it dashed against the caverns. It was infested with many crocodiles and frequented by masses of diverse birds. With Agastya, the gods, the gandharvas, the great nagas and the immensely fortunate rishis approached the great ocean."'

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'Lomasha said, "On approaching the ocean, the illustrious rishi who was Varuna's son told the gods and the rishis who had gathered with him, 'For the welfare of the world, I will drink up Varuna's abode. Swiftly make the arrangements that are appropriate.' Having spoken these words, the undecaying son of Mitra and Varuna began to drink up the ocean in his anger, while all the worlds looked on. On seeing how the ocean was being drunk up, the immortals, together with Indra, were extremely astounded and began to worship him by chanting his praises. 'You are the protector. You are the creator of the worlds. You ensure the welfare of the worlds. Through your grace, the universe, with all the immortals, will be saved from destruction.' While he was worshipped by the thirty gods, the musical instruments of the gandharvas sounded in every direction. Divine blossoms were showered down on him. The great-souled one made the great ocean bereft of water.

'"On seeing that the great ocean had been rendered waterless, the gods were extremely delighted. Grasping divine and supreme weapons, and with uplifted hearts, they began to kill those danavas. They were killed by the great-souled thirty gods, who were extremely strong and swift and roared out aloud. They were unable to withstand the force of the great-souled gods or bear that force. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Attacked by the thirty gods, the danavas let out terrible roars. Being attacked, they could put up a tumultuous fight only for an instant. They had already been burnt through the austerities of the sages who were pure in their souls. Therefore, though they tried their best, they could not prevent being destroyed by the thirty. They were adorned with golden armour, earrings and arm-guards. When they were killed, they looked extremely beautiful, like *kimshuka* flowers.[418] O supreme among men! Those among the Kaleyas who were not killed, cleft the goddess earth and sought refuge in the nether regions.

'"On seeing the danavas killed, the thirty gratified the bull among sages with diverse praises and words. 'O immensely fortunate one! Through your favours, the worlds have obtained great happiness. The Kaleyas, cruel in valour, have been killed through your energy. O mighty-armed one! You ensure the welfare of the worlds. Fill up the ocean again, by giving up the water that you had drunk.' Having been thus addressed, the illustrious bull among sages replied, 'The water has already been digested by me. Think of some other means and make your best efforts to fill up the ocean.' Having heard the words of the maharshi, whose soul had been perfected, the assembled gods were surprised and distressed. They took each other's leave and bowed in salutation to the bull among sages. O great king! All the subjects and brahmanas returned whence they had come. The thirty gods, together with Vishnu, went to the grandfather. They consulted again and again about filling up the ocean. All of them joined their hands in salutation and spoke about filling up the ocean."'

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'Lomasha said, "Then Brahma, the grandfather of the world, spoke to the assembled gods. 'O gods! All of you depart, as you desire and as you wish. A great deal of time must pass before the ocean returns to its natural state. The great king Bhagiratha will do this because of his relatives.'"

'Yudhishthira said, "O brahmana! O sage! How did the relatives become the cause? How was the ocean filled through Bhagiratha's efforts? O one rich in austerities! O brahmana! I wish to hear this in detail. Tell me the supreme account of that king."'

Vaishampayana said, 'Having been thus addressed by the great-souled Dharmaraja, the Indra among brahmanas recounted the greatness of the great-souled Sagara.'

'Lomasha said, "A king named Sagara was born in Ikshvaku's lineage. He possessed beauty, character and strength and was powerful. But he did not have a son. O

descendant of the Bharata linage! Having exterminated the Haihayas and the Talajanghas and having conquered other kings, he ruled over his own kingdom. O bull among the Bharata lineage! He had two wives who were proud of their beauty and their youth. O best of the Bharata lineage! One was from Vidarbha and the other from Shibi. O Indra among kings! Desirious of obtaining a son, the king performed great austerities, together with his wives, seeking refuge on Mount Kailasa. While he was engaged in great austerities and immersed in yoga, he saw the great-souled Tryaksha, the destroyer of Tripura, Shankara, Bhava, Ishana, Shulapani, Pinaki, Tryambaka, Shiva, Ugresha and Uma's consort, the one with many forms.[419] As soon as he saw that granter of boons, the mighty-armed king, together with his wives, prostrated themselves and asked for a son. Hara was pleased and told the supreme among kings and his two wives, 'O king! Considering the moment when you have asked me for a boon, sixty thousand brave sons who will be proud in war will be born to one of your wives. O supreme among men! One son will be born to the other wife. O king! But they will all be destroyed together. But you will have one brave descendant from the one who bears the single one.' Having spoken these words, Rudra instantly vanished. King Sagara also returned to his residence with his wives, happy in his heart.

'"O best of men! Then his lotus-eyed wives, Vaidarbhi and Shaibya, conceived. In due time, Vaidarbhi gave birth to a gourd. Shaibya gave birth to a son who was as beautiful as the gods. The king then thought about throwing away the gourd. But he heard a voice from the sky, deep in sound. 'O king! Do not act in haste. Do not abandon your sons. Take the seeds out from the gourd. Let them be carefully preserved in a warm vessel partly filled with ghee. O king! You will then obtain sixty thousand sons. O lord of men! Mahadeva has decided that your sons will be born in this fashion. Do not make your mind act contrary to this.'"'

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'Lomasha said, "O bull among the Bharata lineage! Having heard these words from the sky, the king, supreme among kings, respectfully acted as he had been asked to. O king! Sixty thousand sons were born to the rajarshi through Rudra's grace. They were terrible, the performers of cruel deeds and could travel around in the sky. Since they were many in number, they oppressed all the worlds, even the immortals. Addicted to fighting, they oppressed the thirty gods, the gandharvas, the rakshasas and all other beings. Slaughtered by the evil-minded sons of Sagara, together with all the gods, the worlds sought refuge with Brahma. The immensely fortunate grandfather of all the worlds told them, 'O thirty gods! With all the worlds, go back to where you came from. Within a short space of time, a great destruction of the sons of Sagara will occur. O gods! Their own great and terrible deeds will bring this on them.' O lord of men! Having been thus addressed, the gods and the worlds took the grandfather's leave and returned to where

they had come from.

'"O bull among the Bharata lineage! Many days passed. The valorous King Sagara instated himself for a horse sacrifice. Protected by his sons, his horse roamed the earth and reached the terrible-looking and waterless ocean. Though they sought to protect it with care, it disappeared there. O son! Then Sagara's sons thought that the supreme horse had been abducted. Returing to their father, they told him that the horse had disappeared and had been abducted. He told them, 'All of you go and search for the horse in all the directions.' O great king! On their father's instructions, they looked for the horse in all the directions, in places where there were no paths and everywhere, even in the bottom of the earth. Then all of Sagara's sons assembled together, but could not find the horse or the person who had abducted the horse. They returned to their father, and joining their hands in salutation, said, 'O king! On the king's command, we have searched the entire earth, with its oceans, forests, islands, female rivers, male rivers, caves, mountains and wooded regions. O king! But we have not been able to find the horse, nor the person who has abducted the horse.' Having heard their words, the king was angered and lost his senses. O king! Driven by destiny, he spoke these words to all of them. 'O sons! Go away and do not return. Look for the horse in each direction. Do not return without the sacrificial horse.' Accepting the command, Sagara's sons began to search the earth once again.

'"Then the brave ones saw a yawning hole in the earth. Sagara's sons entered the hole and began to dig there. With spades and axes, they dug up the bed of the ocean. Being thus dug by the combined efforts of Sagara's sons, Varuna's abode was ripped apart on all sides and suffered extreme pain. Asuras, nagas, rakshasas and diverse other beings were killed by Sagara's sons and screamed in pain. Hundreds and thousands of living beings were seen with severed heads, without torsos and with their thighs, bones and heads shattered. Thus, they continued to dig in the ocean, the abode of crocodiles.[420] A great deal of time passed, but the horse could still not be seen. O lord of the earth! In their anger, Sagara's sons then dug the ocean in the north-eastern direction, until they reached the nether regions.[421] They saw the horse roaming around on the surface of the ground there and the great-souled Kapila, unsurpassed in a mass of energy and radiant in austerities, like a flaming fire."'

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'Lomasha said, "O king! On seeing the horse, they shivered with delight. Driven by destiny, they showed no respect for the great-souled Kapila. O great king! Desirous of grabbing the horse, they dashed towards it in anger. Kapila, supreme among sages, was angered at this. Kapila, supreme among sages, was known as Vasudeva. He opened his eyes wide and created energy from them. That immensely energetic one burnt down the

sons of Sagara.

'"Having seen them burnt to ashes, the great ascetic Narada went to Sagara and told him. On hearing these terrible words from the mouth of the sage, the king was distracted for a moment. But then he thought of the words of Sthanu.[422] He thought about the horse. Then he reassured himself and summoned his son's son, Anshuman, the son of Asamanja.[423] O tiger among the Bharata lineage! He spoke these words to his grandson. 'My sixty thousand sons are boundlessly energetic. But on my account, they have been killed through Kapila's energy. O son![424] O unblemished one! Your father has also been abandoned by me, for the sake of protecting dharma and for the welfare of the citizens.'"'

'Yudhishthira asked, "O one rich in austerities! Why did Sagara, tiger among kings abandon his own valorous son, one who is difficult to abandon? Tell me."

'Lomasha replied, "Sagara had a son famous by the name of Asamanja. He was born through Shaibya. He used to grasp the weak and crying infants of the citizens by the hooves[425] and throw them into the river. Overcome by fear and grief, the citizens assembled together and with hands joined in salutation, all of them went and prayed to Sagara. 'O great king! You are our protector from fears like the wheels of the enemy. You should therefore protect us from the terrible fear due to Asamanja.' Having heard those terrible words of the citizens, the supreme of kings was distracted for an instant. Then he told his advisers, 'Let my son Asamanja be expelled immediately from the city. If you wish to do that which brings me pleasure, perform this act swiftly.' O lord of men! Having been thus addressed by that Indra of men, the advisers swiftly did what the king had asked them to. This is the entire account of how the great-souled Sagara banished his son for the welfare of the citizens. I will now recount to you everything about what Sagara told the great archer Anshuman. Listen to me.

'"Sagara said, 'O son! I am aggrieved that I abandoned your father, at the death of my sons and I am also tormented because I have not been able to obtain the horse. O grandson! Therefore, I am tormented by misery and am deluded because of impediment to the sacrifice. You must bring back the horse from hell.'"'[426]

'Lomasha said, "Having been thus addressed by the great-souled Sagara, Anshuman sadly went to the place where the earth had been torn apart. Through that path, he entered the ocean and saw the great-souled Kapila and the horse. On seeing that ancient and supreme of rishis, he bowed down his head on the ground and informed him about the task for which he had come. O great king! Kapila was pleased with Anshuman. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The one with dharma in his soul told him to ask for a boon. First, he[427] asked for the horse needed for the sacrifice. Second, he asked for water to purify his fathers.[428] The immensely energetic Kapila, bull among sages, told him, 'O fortunate one! O unblemished one! I will give you the boons you have asked for.

Forgiveness, dharma and truth are established in you. Sagara will become successful through you. Your father has truly got a son. Through your powers, the sons of Sagara will go to heaven. Your grandson will bring down the three-coursed one from heaven.[429] He will satisfy Maheshvara[430] and purify the sons of Sagara. O bull among men! Be fortunate and take back the sacrificial horse. O son! Complete the sacrifice of the great-souled Sagara. Having been thus addressed by the great-souled Kapila, Anshuman took the horse and returned to the sacrificial ground of the great-souled one.[431] There he bowed at the feet of the great-souled Sagara and told him everything and he inhaled the fragrance of his[432] head. He told him everything that he had heard and seen and about the destruction of the sons of Sagara. He told him that the horse had been brought to the sacrificial ground. On hearing this, King Sagara stopped grieving for his sons. He honoured Anshuman and completed the sacrifice.

'"When the sacrifice was completed, Sagara was honoured by all the gods. He thought of the ocean, Varuna's abode, as his son.[433] After ruling over the kingdom for a long time, the lotus-eyed one handed over the burden to his grandson and went to heaven. O great king! Anshuman, with dharma in his soul, ruled over the earth, up to the frontiers of the ocean, as his grandfather had. His son was Dilipa, devoted to dharma. Having handed over the kingdom to him, Anshuman left. But Dilipa had heard about the great destruction of his fathers.[434] Overwhelmed with grief, he thought about their end. The king made great efforts to bring down the Ganga. But though he tried with all his strength, he could not ensure the descent. He had a handsome son, devoted to dharma. He was known as Bhagiratha. He was truthful and no one spoke ill of him. Instating him in the kingdom, Dilipa resorted to the forest. O bull among the Bharata lineage! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! After obtaining success in austerities, in due course of time, that king went to the forest and then to heaven."'

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'Lomasha said, "That great king and emperor, a maharatha and a great archer, was the delight of the minds and eyes of all the worlds. That mighty-armed one heard about the terrible destruction of his fathers from the great-souled Kapila and how they had failed to attain heaven. With misery in his heart, the lord of men handed over the kingdom to his advisers and went to the slopes of the Himalayas to torment himself with austerities. Cleansed of sins, he performed austerities to worship Ganga. O best of men! He saw the Himalayas, supreme among mountains. It was adorned with peaks of many forms, decorated with minerals. It was embraced on all sides by clouds floating on the wind. It was adorned with rivers, groves and ridges. It was infested by lions and tigers in its caves and caverns. There were birds of diverse forms that sung diverse tunes

—*bhringarajas*,[435] swans, *datyuhas*,[436] waterhens, peacocks, *shatapatras*,[437] cuckoos, *jivajivakas*,[438] chakoras with black-tinged eyes and those that love their young. The waterbodies were beautiful and decorated with lotuses. They were ornamented with the sweet notes of cranes. The flat plains were frequented by kinnaras and apsaras. In all directions, the trees had been marked by the sharp tusks of the elephants of the directions.[439] The place was frequented by *vidyadharas*[440] and adorned with diverse gems. It was infested by snakes with virulent poison, their tongues flaming. Some parts were like gold, others glittered like silver. Some places were like a mass of collyrium. He reached these Himalayas.

'"The best of men engaged in terrible austerities there. He lived for a thousand years on fruits, roots and water. After one thousand celestial years had passed, the great river Ganga showed herself in personified form. Ganga asked, 'O great king! What do you wish from me? What can I give you? O best of men! Tell me and I will do as you say.' Having been thus addressed, the king replied to the daughter of the Himalayas.[441] 'O granter of boons! O great river! My grandfathers, the sixty thousand great-souled sons of Sagara, were taken to Vaivasvata's eternal world by Kapila, while they were searching for the horse. They confronted Kapila's energy and were instantly destroyed. Having been destroyed, they cannot reside in heaven until their bodies are sprinkled with your water. O immensely fortunate one! Take my fathers, Sagara's sons, to heaven. O great river! I am praying to you for their sake.' Having heard the king's words, Ganga, worshipped by all the worlds, was extremely delighted with Bhagiratha's words and replied, 'O great king! There is no doubt that I will do what you say. But when I descend from the sky to the earth, my force will be difficult to bear. O king! There is no one in the three worlds who can withstand it, other than Nilakantha[442] Maheshvara, foremost among the gods. O mighty-armed one! Satisfy Hara, the granter of boons, through your austerities. The god will sustain my fall on his head. He will do what you desire for the welfare of your fathers.' O king! On hearing these words, the great king Bhagiratha went to Mount Kailasa and satisfied Shankara[443] through austerities. O king! After some time had passed, the supreme of men obtained from him the boon that he would bear Ganga, so that his fathers might be entitled to reside in heaven."'

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'Lomasha said, "After hearing Bhagiratha's words, to do that which would ensure the welfare of the gods, the illustrious one replied to the king, 'O mighty-armed one! O supreme among kings! For your sake, I will bear the pure, auspicious and divine river of the gods when she falls from the sky.' O mighty-armed one! Having said this, he[444] went to the Himalayas, surrounded by his terrible attendants, who held diverse upraised

weapons. Having established himself there, he told Bhagiratha, best of men, 'O mighty-armed one! Now ask the river, the daughter of the king of the mountains. I will bear the best of rivers when she falls from heaven. Having heard these words spoken by Sharva,[445] the king bowed and began to meditate on the Ganga, his mind controlled. On seeing the king meditating and Ishana[446] established there, the one with the pure waters was suddenly dislodged from the sky. On seeing her fall, the gods, together with the maharshis, and the gandharvas, the nagas and the rakshasas, assembled to witness the sight. Then Ganga, daughter of the Himalayas, infested with fish and crocodiles and full of giant whirlpools, fell down from the sky. O king! Hara bore Ganga, the girdle of the sky. Falling on his forehead, she looked like a garland of pearls. O king! Thus did the one who goes to the ocean divide herself into three streams. Her water, filled with foam, looks like an array of swans. In some places, she is coiled tortuously. In others, she stumbles. In others, she speeds like a drunken woman, clad in a garment of foam. In some places, her waters raise a great roar, uttering the supreme of sounds. In this fashion, she performed many acts on falling from the sky.

'"On reaching the surface of the earth, she told Bhagiratha, 'O great king! Show me the path that I should follow. O lord of the earth! It is for your sake that I have descended on earth.' O best of men! Hearing these words, King Bhagiratha went to the place where the bodies of the great-souled sons of Sagara were kept, so that they might be purified with the sacred waters. Having borne Ganga, Hara, worshipped by the worlds, went to Kailasa, best of mountains, with the thirty gods. Going to the ocean with Ganga, the king forcefully filled up the ocean, Varuna's abode. The king thought of Ganga as his daughter. His desires having been fulfilled, he offered oblations to his ancestors there. I have told you everything about the three-streamed Ganga and how she descended on earth to fill up the ocean, which was drunk up by the great-souled one for a specific reason, and how Agastya brought Vatapi, the killer of brahmanas, to his destruction. O lord! O great king! I have told you everything that you asked."'

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Vaishampayana said, 'O bull among the Bharata lineage! In due course, Kounteya[447] travelled to the two rivers Nanda and Aparananda, the cleanser of sins and fear. On reaching Mount Hemakuta, the granter of health, the king saw many extraordinary and unthinkable things. From mere words, clouds are created there and there are showers of thousands of stones, so that people are saddened that they are incapable of ascending. The wind always blows there and the gods shower down. In evening and in the morning, the lord who is the bearer of sacrificial offerings,[448] is seen. The Pandava saw many such extraordinary things and again asked Lomasha about these extraordinary things.

‘Lomasha said, “O destroyer of enemies! O king! I will tell you as I have heard it earlier. Listen attentively to me. An ascetic by the name of Rishabha lived on this Mount Rishabha. The ascetic was aged many hundreds of years and was extremely prone to anger. On being addressed by others, he angrily told the mountain, ‘Shower stones on whoever utters a word here.’ The ascetic summoned the wind and said that not a sound should be uttered. Thus, if a man speaks a word, he is restrained by the clouds. O king! Through such deeds, the maharshi performed some acts out of anger and he restrained others from being done.

‘“O king! We have heard that in ancient times, the gods came to Nanda and suddenly men assembled, in their desire to see the gods. The gods, with Shakra at the forefront, did not desire to be seen. By erecting mountains, they made the region difficult of access. O Kounteya! From that day, men cannot even look at the mountain, not to speak of ascending it. O Kounteya! One who has not performed austerities cannot see the great mountain, or climb it. Therefore, control your speech. It was here that the gods performed great sacrifices. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Their marks can be seen even today. The *durva* grass here is like kusha grass[449] and the ground is strewn with it. O lord of the earth! There are many trees that look like sacrificial stakes. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The gods and the rishis live there even today. Their sacrificial fires can be seen in the evenings and in the mornings. O Kounteya! If one bathes there, one’s sins are instantly destroyed. O best of the Kuru lineage! Therefore, perform your ablutions there, together with your younger brothers. Then, having washed your limbs in Nanda, go to Koushiki, where Vishvamitra performed terrible and supreme austerities.”’

Vaishampayana said, ‘The king and his companions washed their limbs there. Then they went to the sacred and beautiful Koushiki, the river whose waters are auspicious.’

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Vaishampayana said, 'O bull among the Bharata lineage! This is the sacred Koushiki, the river of the gods. Vishvamitra's hermitage is resplendent here. This is the hermitage of the great-souled Kashyapa, famous by the name of Punya. His son was Rishyashringa, an ascetic who had controlled his senses. Through the power of his austerities, he made Vasava[450] rain. Because of his fear, the slayer of Bala and Vritra[451] showered down at the time of a drought. Kashyapa's son, the energetic lord, was born from a deer. He performed a great and extraordinary deed in Lomapada's territory. When the crops were restored,[452] King Lomapada bestowed his daughter Shanta on him, as Savita did for Savitri.[453]

'Yudhishthira asked, "How was Kashyapa's son Rishyashringa born as the son of a deer? This is against the norms of sexual intercourse. How did he acquire asceticism? Why was Shakra scared of that wise child? Why did the slayer of Bala and Vritra shower down at the time of a drought? What kind of beauty did the princess Shanta, rigid in vows, possess? How did she tempt him when he was in the form of a deer? It has been heard that rajarshi Lomapada was a follower of dharma. Why did the chastiser of Paka[454] not rain down in his territory? O lord! O exalted one! Tell me all this exactly, and in detail. I wish to hear about Rishyashringa's deeds."

'Lomasha said, "The brahmana rishi Vibhandaka had controlled his soul through austerities. He was as radiant as Prajapati and his semen was always successful. Hear how the powerful Rishyashringa was born as his son. He was extremely energetic and though young, was respected by the aged. He was born in a great lake. Going to the great lake, Kashyapa stayed there for a long time, engaged in austerities. The rishi, worshipped by the gods and the rishis, became exhausted. O king! There, when he was washing in the water, he saw the apsara Urvashi and spilt his semen. O king! A thirsty doe drunk it up with the water and conceived. Whatever has been decreed by destiny and laid down by fate must inevitably happen. From that doe was born a son, the great rishi Rishyashringa.[455] He was always engaged in austerities and grew up in the forest. O king! There was a horn on the head of that great-souled one and because of that, he became famous as Rishyashringa. O king! Except for his father, he never saw another man and therefore, his mind was always fixed on brahmacharya.

'"At that time, there was a lord of Anga famous by the name of Lomapada and he was Dasharatha's friend. It has been heard that, driven by desire, he committed falsehoods on brahmanas. That lord of the earth was then abandoned by brahmanas. Without a priest, the king acted as he willed. The one with the thousand eyes[456] stopped showering and the subjects suffered. The lord of the earth asked wise brahmanas, full of austerities, who were capable of making the lord of the gods shower again. 'How will

Parjanya[457] rain again? Show me a way.' Thus asked, each of those wise ones expressed his own view. But one supreme sage among them told the king, 'O Indra among kings! The brahmanas are angry with you. Find a way to appease them. O king! Fetch the sage's son Rishyashringa. He lives in the forest, immersed in virtue, and is inexperienced about the female sex. O king! If that great ascetic comes to your territory, I have no doubt that Parjanya will immediately shower rain.' On hearing these words, the king performed deeds to cleanse his soul. He went away and returned only when the brahmanas had been appeased. On hearing that the king had returned, the subjects received him back. Then the lord of Anga summoned his advisers, who were wise in offering counsel. He consulted so that endeavours might be made to bring Rishyashringa. With the aid of his advisers, who were learned in the sacred texts, skilled in the ways of artha and knowledgeable about policy, the unblemished one thought of a method.

'"The lord of the earth summoned the foremost of courtesans. The king told the courtesans, who were skilled in everything, 'O beautiful ones! Find out some means of bringing the rishi's son Rishyashringa to my territory. Tempt him and gain his confidence.' Those women were scared out of fear for the king's curse. They turned pale, lost their senses and said that the task was impossible. But there was one among them who was old and she told the king, 'O great king! I will attempt to bring the one with the ascetic riches here. But you will have to ask for some objects of desire that I have in mind. I will then be able to tempt the rishi's son Rishyashringa.' The king ordered that everything she wished for should be obtained. He gave her a lot of riches and many gems. O lord of the earth! She took several women with her, endowed with youth and beauty. Then she swiftly went to the forest."'

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'Lomasha said, "O descendant of the Bharata lineage! To ensure the success of the king's objective, she contructed a hermitage on a boat—both because the king ordered it and because it fitted with her own wishes. It was beautifully adorned with many artificial trees with flowers and fruit. It had many bowers and creepers that yielded succulent fruit to satisfy every desire. She made it extremely beautiful and enticing. That hermitage on a boat was beautiful, extraordinary and an unsurpassed sight. Then she moored the boat a short distance away from Kashyapa's hermitage. She sent out some men to survey the area frequented by the sage. Deciding on a course of action and perceiving a chance, the courtesan summoned her daughter, who possessed great intelligence, and sent her to Kashyapa's son. That skilled one went to the hermitage and approached the rishi's son, who was always engaged in austerities.

'"The courtesan said, 'O sage! Is everything well with the ascetics here? Are there

plenty of roots and fruit? Do you find pleasure in this hermitage? I have come here to visit you. Are the austerities of the ascetics increasing? I hope your father has not diminished in energy. O brahmana! I hope he is pleased with you. O Rishyashringa! Are you able to pursue your studies?'

'"Rishyashringa replied, 'You shine with radiance like the light. I think that you are worthy of showing obeisance. I will give you water to wash your feet, and according to dharma, fruits and roots to satisfy your desires. Please be seated on this mat made of kusha grass, covered with black antelope skin and made comfortable. Where is your hermitage? O brahmana! What is the name of the vow that you are observing, like a god?'

'"The courtesan said, 'O son of Kashyapa! My beautiful hermitage is three yojanas away, on the other side of the mountain. My dharma is not to accept obeisance. Nor do I touch water to wash my feet.'

'"Rishyashringa replied, 'I will give you ripe fruit, *bhallas*,[458] *amlakas*,[459] *parushakas*,[460] *ingudas*,[461] *dhanvanas*[462] and *priyalas*[463] to satisfy your desires.'"

'Lomasha said, "But having discarded all of these, she gave him extremely expensive food. This was beautiful to look at and extremely tasteful and they were very pleasurable to Rishyashringa. She gave him fragrant garlands and radiant and colourful garments and the best of drinks. Then she played, laughed and amused herself. She played at his side with a ball, like a flowering creeper that was moving around. She touched his body with hers and embraced Rishyashringa again and again. She bent the branches and plucked the flowers from trees like *sarjas*,[464] ashokas and *tilakas*.[465] Then, as if without shame, and overcome with liquour, she tempted the maharshi's son. Having seen the change in Rishyashringa, she pressed him again and again with her body. Then, pretending that the time for agnihotra had come, she slowly went away, casting backward glances. At her departure, Rishyashringa was overcome with desire and lost his senses. Because of his feelings for her, he felt emptiness. He sighed again and again in distress.

'"At that instant, Kashyapa Vibhandaka appeared. His eyes were tawny, like a lion's. He was covered with body hair, up to the tips of his nails. He possessed learning, conduct and meditative faculties. He approached and saw his seated son, alone, immersed in thought, and with his mind disturbed. His eyes were raised up and he sighed repeatedly. Vibhandaka told his dejected son, 'O son! Why has wood for the sacrificial kindling not been brought? Have you still not performed agnihotra today? Have the sacrificial ladles been cleaned? Have you brought out the sacrificial cow and her calf today? O son! You do not seem as you used to be. You are immersed in thought and have lost your senses. Why are you so dejected today? I am asking you. Who came here today?'"'

'"Rishyashringa replied, 'A brahmachari came. He had matted hair and he was intelligent. He wasn't too short and he wasn't too tall. His complexion was golden. His eyes were long, like lotuses. He was radiant, like a son of the gods. His prosperous form was as radiant as the sun. His eyes were beautiful and black and white, like those of chakora birds. His matted hair was blue, clear, fragrant and extremely long, and braided with golden thread. Like lightning blazing in the sky, there were two receptacles under his throat. There were two balls under his throat.[466] They had no hair on them and were extremely beautiful. His waist was thin around the navel. But his hips were expansive. Like mine, a girdle blazed from under his garment. But his was made of gold. That apart, there was an extraordinary sight—a tinkling sound emerged from his feet.[467] Ornaments with a similar sound were also tied to his wrists. They were like this string of rosaries, but made a musical sound. They made a sound whenever he moved, like intoxicated swans in a pond. His garments were extraordinary to see. They were not like mine, but were beautiful. His face was also an extraordinary sight. His words brought gladness to the heart. His speech was like that of male cuckoos. When I heard it, it saddened the innermost parts of my heart. During the spring months, the forest is fragrant when fanned by the wind. O father! Like that, there was a supreme and sacred fragrance when the wind fanned him. His matted hair was tied neatly and arranged so that it divided his forehead into two equal halves. His ears seemed to be surrounded by circles.[468] They were coloured and beautiful of form. He held something that looked like a beautiful circular fruit[469] in his right hand. It bounced repeatedly on the ground and rose up again, in an extraordinary way. He hit it and whirled around. His body was like a tree stirred by the wind. O father! On seeing that son of the immortals, my joy became supreme and desire was born in me. He embraced my body repeatedly. He grasped me by my matted hair and lowered my mouth. He placed his mouth on my mouth and uttered a sound that brought great pleasure to me. He did not desire water for washing the feet, or the fruits that I had brought. He told me that those were the vows followed by him. He gave me other novel types of fruit. I tasted all the fruits he gave me. These are not as succulent as those. They did not have skins like these have. Nor did they have seeds like ours. The generous one gave me liquids to drink. They were extremely fine in flavour. As soon as I drank them, great pleasure engulfed me and the ground seemed to move. These are the beautiful and fragrant garlands that he tied up with silken threads. Having scattered them here, he left for his own hermitage, blazing in austerities. I have lost my senses at his departure. My body seems to be burning. I wish to go to him immediately. I wish that he should always roam around here. O father! I shall go to him this very instant. Please tell me the name of the vow observed by him. I wish to observe it, together with him. I wish to observe the severe and austere

rites practised by him.'"'

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'"Vibhandaka said, 'O son! These are rakshasas. They roam around in their extraordinary forms. They are unsurpassed in beauty and are extremely terrible. They always endeavour to create obstacles in the way of austerities. O son! They assume beautiful forms. They assume different forms to tempt. Those terrible deeds are used to dislodge the sages of the forest from the happiness of their worlds. Sages who are in control of their souls never serve them, particularly if they desire the worlds of the virtuous. O one who doesn't perform evil acts! Those ones of evil deeds find delight in obstructing ascetics and destroying their austerities. O son! Those liquids are for those who aren't virtuous. They are wine and desired by evil ones. These garlands, coloured, bright and fragrant, are not regarded by the learned as fit for sages.'"

'Lomasha said, "Having restrained his son and told him that these were rakshasas, Vibhandaka went out to search for her. After searching for three days, he failed to find her, and returned to his hermitage. When Kashyapa again went out to gather fruit, as was the practice for hermits, the courtesan again returned to tempt the sage Rishyashringa. As soon as he saw her, Rishyashringa was delighted. His mind was deluded and he told her, 'Let us go to your hermitage before my father returns.' O king! Then she tempted Kashyapa's only son into the boat and unmoored it. She tempted him through various means and brought him to the king of Anga. That extremely beautiful boat was moored within sight of a hermitage. A beautiful wood was created near the bank and named Rajashrama.[470] The king brought Vibhandaka's only son and lodged him in the inner quarters. And he suddenly saw the god[471] showering rain, until the world was full and flooded with water. His wishes fulfilled, Lomapada bestowed his daughter Shanta on Rishyashringa. To counter the wrath,[472] he instructed cattle to be placed on the roads and the land tilled. Along the road that Vibhandaka would follow, the king placed many animals and warriors to look after the animals. 'When maharshi Vibhandaka arrives in search of his son and asks you, you must join your hands in salutation and tell him, "O maharshi! These animals and this tilled land belong to your son. What can we do to please you? All of us are your servants and await your command."'[473] Meanwhile, after gathering roots and fruit, the sage who was exceedingly wrathful returned to his hermitage. He searched for his son and on not finding him there, became extremely angry. Rent asunder by rage, he suspected that this was the work of the king.

'"Deciding that he would burn up the king of Anga and all his possessions, he left for Champa.[474] Exhausted and hungry, Kashyapa arrived at settlements that were prosperous with cattle. He was honoured by the herdsmen in accordance with the

prescribed rites, as if he was a king, and spent the night there. Having received great homage from them, he asked them, 'O pleasant ones! Whose servants are you?' All of them respectfully told him, 'All these riches belong to your son.' He was thus worshipped in region after region and heard similar pleasant words. Thus, his anger was greatly appeased and in a happy frame of mind, he approached the city of the king of Anga. He was worshipped by that bull among men. He saw his son, like Indra in heaven. He also saw his daughter-in-law Shanta there, looking like a flash of lightning. Having seen the villages, the settlements of cattle, his son and Shanta, his extreme anger was pacified. O Indra among men! Vibhandaka showed his supreme favours to that lord of the earth. The maharshi, as resplendent as the sun and the fire, left his son there and told him, 'Having done everything that pleases the king, you will return to the forest once a son has been born.' Rishyashringa acted according to his words. He returned to where his father was. Shanta tended to him,[475] like the devoted Rohini attends on the moon in the sky, like the fortunate Arundhati waits on Vasishtha, like Damayanti on Nala and like Shachi on the wielder of the vajra.[476] O Ajamidha![477] Like Nadayani Indrasena was always obedient to Mudgala,[478] thus was Shanta towards Rishyashringa in the forest. O Indra among men! Driven by love, she tended to him. That sacred hermitage is radiant here. The great lake, site of sacred deeds, is radiant here. O king! Having bathed here and purifying yourself, you will accomplish all your deeds and then go on to other tirthas."'

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Vaishampayana said, 'O Janamejaya! Then the Pandava left Koushiki and one after another, went to all the other sacred places. O king! He went to the ocean, to the confluence of the Ganga. He performed his ablutions in the middle of the five hundred rivers. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Then, together with his brothers, the brave lord of the earth travelled along the shores of the ocean towards Kalinga.

'Lomasha said, "O Kounteya! This is Kalinga, where the river Vaitarani flows. Here, under the refuge of the gods, Dharma performed sacrifices. This is the northern bank, always frequented by brahmanas and inhabited by rishis. It is a sacrificial ground that has been made beautiful by a mountain. In ancient times, other rishis have also performed sacrifices here and gone to heaven along the route followed by the gods. O Indra among kings! This is the place where Rudra grasped the sacrificial animal.[479] O Indra among men! Rudra grasped the animal and said, 'This is my share.' O bull among the Bharata lineage! When the animal was stolen, the gods told him, 'Do not covet the property of others. Do not destroy all dharma.' Later, they praised Rudra with sweet words. They satisfied him with a sacrifice and showed him honour. Then, discarding the animal, he followed the path traversed by the gods. O Yudhishthira! Listen to what is

said about Rudra. 'As a result of their fear of Rudra, the gods resolved that the supreme share of everything that was not stale would always be set apart for him. A man who touches the water here, while reciting this verse, has the route of the gods as his path and sees it with his eyes.'"'

Vaishampayana said, 'Then all the immensely fortunate Pandavas, together with Droupadi, descended into Vaitarani and offered oblations to the ancestors. Yudhishthira said, "O Lomasha! O illustrious one! O one rich in austerities! Behold. As soon as I have bathed in this river, I have gone beyond what is human. O follower of good vows! Through your grace, I can see all the worlds. This is the sound of the great-souled hermits, as they recite their prayers."

'Lomasha replied, "O Yudhishthira! O lord of the earth! Keep quiet. The sound that you hear is at a distance of three hundred thousand yojanas. O king! The beautiful forest that manifests itself here belongs to the one who created himself.[480] O Kounteya! The powerful Vishvakarma performed a sacrifice here. At that sacrifice, the one who created himself gave the earth, with all its mountains, forests and regions, as a stipend to the great-souled Kashyapa. O Kounteya! As soon as she had been given away, the earth became dejected. In anger, she spoke to the illustrious lord of the worlds. 'O illustrious one! You should not have given me away to a mere mortal. Your giving me away will be unsuccessful. I will go to rasatala.'[481] O lord of the earth! On seeing that the earth was dejected, the illustrious rishi Kashyapa pacified her. O Pandava! She was satisfied by his austerities and once again emerged from the water, establishing herself as an altar. O king! You can see it there, with all the signs of an altar. O great king! Ascend it, and you will be extremely valorous. As you ascend it today, I will myself pronounce the benediction. O Ajamidha! As soon as it is touched by a mortal, this altar immerses itself in the ocean again. 'Agni, Mitra, the womb, the water, the goddess, Vishnu's seed, the navel of amrita.'[482] O Pandava! Having recited these truthful words, swiftly climb up onto the altar."'

Vaishampayana said, 'When the benediction had been pronounced on him, the great-souled Yudhishthira went into the ocean. When he had done all that he had been asked, he went to Mahendra and spent the night there.'

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Vaishampayana said, 'After the lord of the earth had spent a night there, he, together with his brothers, showed the best of homage to the ascetics. Lomasha told him the names of all the ascetics who were there—the Bhrigus, the Angirases, the Vasishthas and the Kashyapas. On meeting them, the rajarshi[483] greeted them, with his hands joined in salutation. He then asked Akritavarna, the valorous follower of Rama,[484] "When will the illustrious Bhargava Rama show himself to the ascetics? On that occasion, I also wish

to see Bhargava.” Akritavarna replied, “Rama knows everything in his soul and your arrival is already known to him. The ascetics see Rama on the fourteenth and the eighth lunar day. When this night is over, it will be the fourteenth lunar day.” Yudhishthira said, “You are a follower of the immensely strong and valorous son of Jamadagni. Earlier, you have yourself witnessed all his deeds. Therefore, tell us today how Rama vanquished all the kshatriyas in battle. Tell us everything about how he did it and the reasons.”

‘Akritavarna said, “There was an immensely strong and great king in Kanyakubja. He was famous in the world as Gadhi. He went to dwell in the forest. While he lived in the forest, a daughter was born to him and she was like an apsara. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Bhargava Richika wished to marry her. Then the king told the brahmana of the rigid vows, ‘There is a custom in our lineage, one that has been established since ancient times. O supreme among brahmanas! Know that a thousand swift and white horses must be given as a bride price and that they must each possess one black ear. O illustrious one! O Bhargava! But you cannot be asked to give this. My daughter should be given to a great-souled one like you.’ Richika replied, ‘I will give you one thousand swift and white horses, each with one black ear. Let your daughter become my wife.’ O king! Having promised this, he[485] told Varuna, ‘As a bride price, give me one thousand swift and white horses, each with one black ear.’ Varuna then gave him one thousand horses. The place from where the horses arose is famous as the tirtha of horses. In Kanyakubja, on the banks of the Ganga, Gadhi then bestowed his daughter Satyavati on him and all the gods were present there. Having obtained one thousand horses, having seen the inhabitants of heaven and having obtained a wife according to dharma, Richika, supreme among brahmanas, pleasured with the slender-waisted maiden as he desired.

‘“O king! When the marriage was over, the supreme of the Bhrigus came to see his son, together with his wife. Having seen them, he was delighted. When the elder was seated, worshipped by the masses of gods, husband and wife joined their hands in salutation and worshipped him. Then the illustrious Bhrigu was delighted and told his daughter-in-law, ‘O fortunate one! Ask for a boon. I will grant what you wish for.’ She pleased the elder for the sake of a son, for herself and for her mother. And he showed her his favours. Bhrigu said, ‘At the time of your seasons, you and your mother must bathe and observe the ritual for having a son. Then you must embrace separate trees—she an *asvattha* and you an udumbura.’[486] O king! But when they embraced the trees, they got them mixed up.[487] When Bhrigu returned one day, he realized the mix-up. The immensely energetic Bhrigu then told his daughter-in-law Satyavati, ‘Your son will be a brahmana who will live the life of a kshatriya and your mother’s great son will be a kshatriya who will live the life of a brahmana. His valour will be great and he will tread the path of the righteous.’ But she sought her father-in-law’s favours again and again.

'Let my son not be like this. I desire that my grandson should be like this.' O Pandava! He brought her satisfaction and said that it would be that way. When the time came, her son Jamadagni was born. He was energetic and radiant and was loved by the Bhargavas. O Pandava! The energetic one grew and surpassed many rishis in his knowledge of the Vedas. O bull among the Bharata lineage! He was as brilliant as the sun and the knowledge of weapons was revealed to him, together with that of the four types of weapons."'[488]

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'Akritavarna said, "The immensely austere Jamadagni devoted himself to the study of the Vedas. Through his austerities, he brought the gods under his control. O king! He went to King Prasenjit and asked for Renuka, and the king gave her to him. When he obtained Renuka as his wife, the descendant of the Bhargava lineage returned to his hermitage and with her aid, engaged in austerities again. Four sons were born from her and Rama was the fifth. But though he was the youngest, Rama was superior to the others.

'"Once, when her sons had gone to gather fruit, Renuka, rigid in her vows, went to have a bath. She saw the king of Marttikavata there, Chitraratha by name. On seeing the prosperous king, garlanded with lotuses, sporting in the water with his wives, Renuka was filled with desire. Because of this unchaste behaviour, she lost her senses and moistened herself. Frightened, she returned to the hermitage. But her husband got to know. He saw that she had been dislodged from her constancy and that she had lost the beauty of purity. The immensely energetic and valorous one reproached her with words of 'Shame!' Then Jamadagni's eldest son, with the name of Rumanvat, arrived—and then Sushena, Vasu and Vishvavasu, one by one. One after another, the illustrious one asked them to kill their mother. But because they were deluded and had lost their senses, they said nothing in reply. He then cursed them in great anger. As a result of the curse, they swiftly lost their minds and began to follow the conduct of animals or birds, or that of inanimate objects.

'"Rama, the destroyer of enemy warriors, entered the hermitage last. The great ascetic Jamadagni told him in great anger, 'O son! Kill your evil mother, without any compassion.' At that, Rama grasped his axe and sliced off his mother's head. O great king! The anger of the great-souled Jamadagni was suddenly appeased. He said in a pleasant voice, 'O son! At my words, you have performed a difficult feat. O one learned in dharma! Ask for anything you desire, as many wishes as may be there in your heart.' Thereupon, he asked that his mother might live again, that he should not retain any memory of the slaying, that he should not be touched by the sin, that his brothers might return to their natural state, that he might be unrivalled in battle and that he should have a long life. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The great ascetic Jamadagni

granted him everything that he wished for.

'"O lord! One day, when the sons had gone out as before, the brave Kartavirya, the king of the region along the shore, arrived. When he came to the hermitage, he was shown homage by the rishi's wife. But insolent from the madness of battle, he did not accept this homage. He destroyed the hermitage. Through force, he carried off the sacrificial cow's calf, though it kept crying. He tore down all the large trees. When Rama returned, his father himself told him what had happened. On seeing the cow weeping, Rama was overcome with great anger. In great wrath, he rushed towards Kartavirya. Bhargava, the destroyer of enemy warriors, bravely engaged him in battle. O king! He grasped his beautiful bow and with his sharp arrows, sliced off his one thousand arms,[489] each of which was like a club. Arjuna's heirs[490] became very angry at Rama. When Rama was not in the hermitage, they rushed at Jamadagni. They killed the immensely valorous ascetic, who refused to fight and unprotected, kept calling out for Rama. O Yudhishthira! Having pierced Jamadagni with their arrows, Kartavirya's sons, the destroyers of enemies, departed. When they had gone away and Jamadagni had died, the descendant of the Bhargava lineage returned to the hermitage with firewood. The brave one saw that his father had been overcome by death. He was miserable and lamented the one who had not deserved to meet this fate."'

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'"Rama said, 'O father! It is because of my sins that you have been killed, like a deer in the forest, by the arrows of those mean and foolish wretches, Kartavirya's heirs. O father! You were learned in dharma. You were always steady in the path of the righteous. You did not cause harm to any beings. How did you deserve a death like this? You were aged and you were unwilling to fight. You were established in your austerities. What sins they must have committed when they killed you with hundreds of sharp arrows. How can they tell their advisers and well-wishers that they have killed a virtuous man who was unwilling to fight?'"

'Akritavarna said, "O king! Thus did he lament in piteous tones and in many ways. Then the immensely ascetic one performed all the funereal rites for his father. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Rama, the vanquisher of enemy cities, then burnt his father in a fire and swore that he would destroy all kshatriyas. Extremely wrathful, immensely strong in battle and valorous, he then grasped his weapons. Alone, like the god of death, he killed Kartavirya's sons. O bull among the kshatriya lineage! He then killed all the kshatriyas who were their followers. Rama, supreme among those who wield arms, destroyed them all. That lord removed kshatriyas from the earth twenty-one times. He built five lakes of blood in Samantapanchaka. The extender of the Bhrigu lineage offered oblations to his ancestors there.

'"Then Richika appeared before Rama in person and restrained him. Then

Jamadagni's powerful son performed a great sacrifice. He satisfied the king of the gods and gave the earth to the officiating priests. O lord of the earth! He constructed a golden altar that was ten *vyamas*[491] long and nine in height and gave it to the great-souled Kashyapa. O king! With Kashyapa's permission, the brahmanas divided it into many pieces and they[492] thus came to be known as Khandavayanas. Having given the earth to the great-souled Kashyapa,[493] the infinitely valorous one began to live on Mahendra, the king of the mountains. Thus did enmity arise between him and the kshatriyas of this world. The entire earth was conquered by Rama, whose energy is infinite."'

Vaishampayana said, 'On the fourteenth lunar day, at the appropriate time, the great-souled Rama showed himself to the brahmanas and to Dharmaraja, together with his younger brothers. The Indra among kings worshipped the lord, together with his brothers. The supreme of kings offered the highest homage to the brahmanas. Having worshipped Jamadagni's son and having been honoured in return, the lord spent a night on Mahendra and then left for a southern direction.'

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Vaishampayana said, 'O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The magnanimous king then went and saw many beautiful and sacred tirthas, some of which were along the shores of the ocean, and all of which were adorned by the presence of brahmanas. O son of Parikshit![494] Pandu's son bathed there and performed donations, together with his younger brothers, who were the sons and grandsons of kings. He then went to a sacred and broad river. The magnanimous one bathed there and offered oblations to the ancestors and the gods. Donating riches to the foremost among brahmanas, he went to Godavari, which heads towards the ocean. O king! Having been cleansed of his sins, he approached the ocean, sacred to the worlds, in Dravida. The brave one saw the extremely sacred Agastya tirtha and also Nari tirtha. There he heard the story of Arjuna's feat, incapable of being performed by others.[495] He was the foremost of archers. When he[496] was worshipped by the supreme rishis, Pandu's son derived supreme delight. Accompanied by Krishna[497] and with his younger brothers, he bathed his limbs in those tirthas. Honouring Arjuna's valour, the lord of kings found delight in the earth there. He donated one thousand cows in those supreme tirthas that are always full of water. Together with his brothers, he happily recounted the story of Arjuna's donations of cattle. O king! One after another, he went to many sacred tirthas, those that were on the shores of the ocean and others too. When all his desires were satisfied, he saw the most sacred Shurparaka.

'Then, after crossing a region on the shores of the ocean, he came to a forest that is

famous on earth. In ancient times, the gods performed austerities there and kings regard it as the most sacred of places. There, he saw the altar of Richika's son,[498] the one who was the foremost of archers and long and thick in the arms. It was surrounded by many ascetics and was worthy of being worshipped by the virtuous. O king! The lord of the earth saw the holy sites of the Vasus, the masses of Maruts, the two Ashvins, Vaivasvata,[499] the Adityas, the lord of riches,[500] Indra, Vishnu, the lord Savita,[501] Bhaga,[502] the moon, Divakara,[503] the lord of the waters,[504] the masses of Sadhyas, Dhata,[505] the ancestors, the great-souled Rudra with his masses of ganas, Sarasvati, the masses of Siddhas, Pushan[506] and all the other immortals. The king saw these beautiful sites and observed fasts there. The king gave away many expensive gems. Having bathed his limbs in all these tirthas, he returned again to Shurparaka. With his brothers, he again went to the tirthas along the shores of the ocean. He then went to the great tirtha of Prabhasa, acclaimed by brahmanas throughout the earth. With his younger brothers and with Krishna, the one with the large and red eyes bathed there, and offered oblations to the masses of gods and the ancestors. So did the brahmanas, together with Lomasha. He lived on water and air for twelve days. He performed ablutions at dawn and dusk. He surrounded himself with flames on all sides. Thus did the supreme upholder of dharma scorch himself with austerities. Rama[507] and Janardana got to know about his practice of severe austerities. The foremost of all the Vrishnis went to Ajamidha Yudhishthira, together with their armies. The Vrishnis saw the sons of Pandu lying down on the ground, their bodies smeared with dirt. On seeing Droupadi, who did not deserve this, they were extremely distressed and lamented loudly. But, strong in spirit, and in accordance with the prescriptions of dharma, he[508] went and offered homage to Rama, Janardana, Krishna's son Samba, Shini's grandson[509] and all the other Vrishnis. All of them also returned the homage to the Parthas and were welcomed by Pandu's sons. O king! They seated themselves around Yudhishthira, like the masses of gods around Indra. Extremely happy, he told them about the deeds of his enemies and about their dwelling in the forest. He told Krishna that Partha,[510] son of the king of the gods, had gone to Indra for weapons. They heard his words and were relieved. On seeing them lean and pitiful, the magnaminous ones from Dasharha[511] were saddened and tears streamed down from their eyes.'

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Janamejaya said, 'O one rich in austerities! When the Vrishnis and the Pandavas met in the tirtha of Prabhasa, what did they do? What did they converse about? All of them were great-souled and they were skilled in the use of every weapon. The Vrishnis and

the Pandavas were well-wishers of each other.'

Vaishampayana said, 'Having arrived at the sacred tirtha of Prabhasa, on the shores of the great ocean, the Vrishnis surrounded the heroic Pandavas and offered them homage. Then Vanamali Rama,[512] the wielder of the plough, the one who is as white as cow's milk, the *kunda* flower,[513] the moon, the lotus and silver, spoke to the lotus-eyed one.[514] "O Krishna! The pursuit of dharma does not lead to good and the pursuit of that which is not dharma does not lead to defeat. The great-souled Yudhishthira wears matted hair and is miserable in the forest, clad in the bark of trees. Duryodhana is the ruler of the earth and the earth does not swallow him up. From this, a man with limited intelligence will think that the pursuit of that which is not dharma is superior to dharma. When Duryodhana prospers and Yudhishthira is in grief, robbed of his kingdom, what is the duty of subjects in the matter? This is a doubt that perplexes men. This was a lord of men whose power was dharma. He followed the path of truth and dharma and was generous. Partha gave up his kingdom and his happiness. Should one forsake dharma and prosper? After banishing the Parthas, will Bhishma, the brahmana Kripa, Drona and the king,[515] the eldest of the lineage, find happiness? Shame on the evil-minded chiefs of the Bharata lineage! In the hereafter, what will that evil chief of the earth[516] tell his ancestors, when he meets them? Having deprived his innocent sons[517] of the kingdom, will he be able to say that he has treated his sons properly? He does not see with his intelligence the reasons behind his having been born sightless, among all the kings of this earth. It is because he banished the Kounteyas from the kingdom. There is no doubt that Vichitravirya's son,[518] together with his sons, after the performance of this cruel act, will not see trees of gold blossom in the world of the ancestors. Yudhishthira and his younger brothers are armed. They are tall, wide of shoulder and have red eyes. Did he not ask them and hear their reply? How could he have fearlessly banished them to the forest? Without any weapons, the long-armed Vrikodara can slay a large army of enemies. On hearing his roars, soldiers release their bowels and their bladders. He suffers now from hunger and thirst and is emaciated from journeys. But when he meets them, he will have weapons and arrows in his hands. He will then remember the extremely terrible dwelling in the forest. I am certain that he will not leave any survivors. On this earth, there will be no one else who is his equal in valour and strength. He is now thin from cold, heat, wind and sun. But in battle, he will not leave any survivors. Atiratha Vrikodara conquered the kings of the east[519] in battle, together with their followers, alone on a chariot and swiftly returned, unharmed, even though he is now miserable in the forest and is clad in barks. Look now at Sahadeva, an ascetic dressed in the garb of an ascetic now. In Dantakura, he defeated all the lords, the kings who had assembled from the south.[520] This brave one,[521] valorous in battle and

alone on a chariot, conquered the kings of the west. He now lives in the forest on roots and fruit. He now sports matted hair and has dirt smeared on his body. This queen,[522] the daughter of an atiratha, arose from a prosperous sacrificial altar. She was always accustomed to a life of comfort and ease. How can she endure the great misery of dwelling in the forest? These are the sons of Dharma,[523] the wind, the lord of the gods and the Ashvins. They are the sons of the gods and deserve to be happy. Deprived of happiness, how can they roam around in the forest? Dharma's son was conquered, together with his wife, his brothers and his attendants, and was driven out. Duryodhana has begun to flourish. Why did the earth, with all her mountains, not collapse?"'

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'Satyaki said, "O Rama! This is not the time for lamentations. That time is past. Even if Yudhishthira does not say anything, let us all act according to what must be done now. There are those in the world who have protectors. They do not need to act themselves. O Rama! In all their deeds they have protectors, like Shibi and Yayati. O Rama! There are those who have to act themselves, but in their deeds, they find protectors in this world. Those brave ones among men are also protected. They never encounter difficulties, like those without protectors. The Parthas have Rama, Janardana, Pradyumna, Samba and me, all capable of protecting the three worlds. How can it be said that he and his brothers must live in the forest? It is appropriate that the army of Dasharha should march out today, with many kinds of weapons and coloured armour. Let Dhartarashtra[524] go to the eternal world of Yama. Let all his relatives be overcome with Vrishni's strength. In your anger, you can encompass the entire earth, not to speak of the wielder of the Sharnga bow.[525] Slay Dhartarashtra and all his relatives, like Vritra was destroyed by the great Indra, the king of the gods. Partha[526] is my brother. He is my friend and my preceptor. He is like Janardana's own soul. It is for this reason that the best time has come. Let us perform this great and difficult deed. Through my supreme weapons, I will counter his[527] shower of arrows. I will kill all of them in battle. O Rama! With my supreme arrows, which are like the venom of serpents and the fire, I will forcefully slice off his head from his body. With the force of strength, I will use my sharp sword to slice off his head from his body in battle. Then I will kill all his companions, Duryodhana and all the other Kurus. O Rohini's son![528] I will take up my weapons on the field of battle and bring joy to all the residents of earth. I will alone kill the foremost warriors among the Kurus, like fire burns down straw at the great time of destruction. Nor will Kripa, Drona, Vikarna and Karna be able to withstand the sharp arrows shot by Pradyumna. I know the valour of your son.[529] I know the action of Krishna's son in battle.[530] Let Samba use the strength of his arms to subdue

Duhshasana, with his chariot and his charioteer. When he is maddened in battle, there is no one who can withstand Jambavati's son in battle. When he was still a child, he suddenly destroyed Shambara's daitya army.[531] Ashvachakra's thighs were round and his arms were long and thick. He killed him in battle.[532] Where is the man who can go elsewhere, once Samba has grasped him in his arms in battle? If the time has come, a man who is in the clutches of death can never escape. Like that, once one has entered the clutches of battle, who can escape with his life? The two maharathas Drona and Bhishma, Somadatta surrounded by his sons, and all their armies, will be burnt down by Vasudeva's flaming arrows. Who is there in all the worlds, including the gods, whom Krishna cannot withstand? When he grasps his weapons and holds excellent arrows in his hand, when he holds the chakra weapon, he is invincible in battle. Let Aniruddha[533] hold his sword and shield in his hands. Let him bedeck the earth with Dhritarashtra's sons—their heads severed from their bodies and dead, like a sacrificial altar strewn with kusha grass. Gada, Ulmuka, Bahuka, Bhanu, the youthful Nishatha—heroes in battle—Sarana and Charudeshna, who are maddened in battle—they must perform deeds that are deserving of their lineage. Let the brave kshatriya armies, with the foremost among the Vrishnis, the Bhojas and the Andhakas, kill the sons of Dhritarashtra in battle and earn extensive fame in this world. Let Abhimanu rule the earth as long as the great-souled Yudhishthira, supreme among the Kurus and best among those who serve dharma, fulfils the oath he swore at the time of the game with the dice.[534] After his enemies are vanquished by the arrows we unleash, let Dharmaraja enjoy the earth. There will be no sons of Dhritarashtra and the son of the suta[535] will be dead. This is our most important task and it will bring us fame."

'Vasudeva said, "O Madhava![536] There is no doubt that what you have said is true. O one whose spirit is strong! We accept your words. But the bull among the Kurus[537] will certainly not wish for land that has not been won through the strength of his own arms. For the sake of desire, or fear, or avarice, Yudhishthira will never abandon his own dharma. Nor will Bhima or Arjuna, or the atirathas the twins, or Krishna, the daughter of Drupada. Both Vrikodara and Dhananjaya are unrivalled in war on earth. Why should he not rule the earth when he has Madri's two sons worshipping him? When the great-souled lord of Panchala, the lords of Kekaya and Chedi[538] and we, march into battle together against the enemies, Suyodhana will depart the world of the living."

'Yudhishthira said, "O Madhava![539] It is not surprising that you should speak in this way. I must protect my truth more than my kingdom. Krishna alone knows what I am. I alone know what Krishna truly is. O Madhava! O foremost among the Shinis![540] When this foremost of men[541] knows that the time has come to display valour, then you and Keshava will vanquish Suyodhana in battle. Let the warriors of Dasharha now depart. I

stand firm with my protectors and they are the protectors of the world of men. O you who cannot be measured! Stand fast in dharma. I will see you again, when we assemble together in happiness."'

Vaishampayana said, 'Then they greeted one another and showed mutual respect. They embraced the elders and all those who were young. The foremost among the Yadus returned to their own houses and the king[542] went on to the tirthas. Having parted from Krishna, Dharmaraja went to the excellent tirtha constructed by the king of Vidarbha. He went and dwelt near Payoshni, whose waters were mingled with the soma juice that had been extracted there.'

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'Lomasha said, "O king! When Nriga sacrified there with soma and gratified Purandara, it has been heard that he[543] was extremely intoxicated. Here the gods, together with Indra and the Prajapatis, performed many different kinds of great sacrifices and donated large amounts of stipends. At seven horse sacrifices, King Amurtarayasa satisfied the wielder of the vajra with soma here. At these seven sacrifices, everything was made of gold, though at usual sacrifices, they are made of wood and clay. At these sacrifices of his, seven rituals became renowned. On each of his sacrificial stakes, seven rings were established. O Yudhishthira! The gods themselves, together with Indra, erected radiant and golden stakes at his sacrifices. At the grand sacrifices of Gaya,[544] the lord of the earth, Indra was intoxicated on soma and the brahmanas on stipends they received. The many grains of sand on this earth, the many stars in the sky and the many drops in rain can never be counted. O great king! Like that, uncountable were the riches that Gaya gave away to the *sadasyas*[545] at those seven sacrifices. Even if those objects can be counted, it is impossible to count the stipends given by that giver of stipends. The golden cows were constructed by Vishvakarma and he used these to gratify the brahmanas who assembled from many directions. O lord of the earth! When the great-souled Gaya performed his sacrifices, the earth was covered everywhere with sacrificial stakes and there was little space left for more. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! He attained Indra's world through his deeds. One who bathes in Payoshni goes to the world attained by him. O Indra among kings! O unblemished one! Therefore, together with your brothers, bathe here. O protector of the earth! You will be cleansed of all sin."'

Vaishampayana said, 'Together with his brothers, the best of men bathed in Payoshni. Together with his brothers, the unblemished and energetic one went to Mount Vaidurya and the great river Narmada. O lord of the earth! In each place, the illustrious rishi Lomasha recounted for him the names of all the beautiful tirthas. As it pleased him and as it suited him, together with his brothers, he went to them one by one, donating riches

in thousands to the brahmanas.

'Lomasha said, "O Kounteya! On seeing Mount Vaidurya and descending into the Narmada, one attains the world of the gods and that of the kings. O best of men! This is the union of treta and dvapara. O Kounteya! Once one has reached this spot, one is cleansed of all sins. O son! This is the place of Sharyati's sacrifice, where the Ashvins drank soma in person, with Koushika.[546] The immensely ascetic Bhargava, the lord Chyavana, was angry with the great Indra and paralysed Vasava in his anger. He also obtained the princess Sukanya as his wife."

'Yudhishthira asked, "How did the illustrious one paralyse the chastiser of Paka? For what reason was the great ascetic Bhargava angered? O brahmana! Why were the Nasatyas[547] made to become drinkers of soma? O illustrious one! Tell me all this exactly as it happened."'

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'Lomasha said, "Maharshi Bhrigu had a son by the name of Bhargava Chyavana. This immensely radiant one performed austerities near this lake. O Pandava! That immensely energetic one established himself like a pillar in this spot for the brave. O lord of the earth! He remained in the same spot for a very long period of time. O king! After a long period of time, the rishi was covered by an anthill and that was covered with creepers. This was coverd by ants. Thus that intelligent one became like a mound of earth on every side. O king! He continued with his austerities inside that anthill.

'"After a long period of time, a king named Sharyati came to amuse himself in that beautiful and supreme lake. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! There were four thousand women with him, ones he had married. There was also a daughter named Sukanya and her brows were beautiful. Surrounded by her friends and adorned in diverse ornaments, she roamed around and approached Bhargava's anthill. On seeing the beautiful trees there, the one with the beautiful teeth began to roam around, surrounded by her friends. She was beautiful, young and intoxicated with pangs of love. She broke off the branches of the trees in the forest, burdened with heavy blossoms. The wise Bhargava saw her alone, when she was without her friends. Like a flash of lighning, he saw her clad in a single piece of garment and adorned in her ornaments. On seeing her roaming in the forest alone, the supremely radiant brahmarshi, endowed with the strength of austerities, was stirred by desire. He spoke to the fortunate one in his broken voice, but she could not hear him. Then Sukanya saw Bhargava's eyes through the anthill. Because of her curiosity, she was deluded of her intelligence. Exclaiming, 'What is this!' she pierced the eyes with a thorn.

'"He was easily stirred to great rage and when his eyes had been pierced, he was angered. He cursed Sharyati's soldiers that all their bowel and bladder movements

should cease. On seeing that the bowel and bladder movements of his soldiers had stopped, the king was saddened and asked, 'The great-souled Bhargava is old and is especially prone to anger. He is always engaged in austerities. Who has injured him today, knowingly or unknowingly? Tell me the truth immediately.' At that, all the soldiers replied, 'We do not know of any injury. Do what you wish and find out through some other means.' Then the king himself used conciliation and threats. He asked his group of well-wishers, but they did not know anything. On seeing her father saddened and his soldiers oppressed by distress, Sukanya then said, 'When I was roaming, I saw some shining being inside the anthill. I thought that it was a firefly and I pierced it.' Having heard this, Sharyati immediately went to the anthill. He saw Bhargava there, aged in austerities and aged in age. Joining his hands in salutation, the lord of the earth prayed for his soldiers. 'Please pardon what that girl did to you out of ignorance.' Bhargava Chyavana then told the lord of the earth, 'She is beautiful and generous. But she has been overcome by grief and delusion. O king! Give your daughter to me as a wife. O lord of the earth! I tell you truly that only then will I pardon.' On hearing the rishi's words, Sharyati did not hesitate at all. He gave his daughter to the great-souled Chyavana.

'"After having married the maiden, Chyavana became pacified. Having obtained the favours, the king returned, together with the soldiers. The unblemished Sukanya obtained the ascetic as her husband. She always tended to him lovingly and observed the rules of austerities. The one with the beautiful face, devoid of discontentment, served the fire and the guests and swiftly began to worship Chyavana."'

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'Lomasha said, "O king! After some time, the gods who were the two Ashvins saw Sukanya. She had just bathed and was naked. On seeing the beautiful limbs of the one who was like the daughter of the king of the gods, the Nasatyas, the Ashvins, came to her and said, 'O one with the beautiful thighs! Whose are you? What are you doing in this forest? O fortunate one! We wish to know about you. O beautiful one! Therefore, tell us.' At that, Sukanya covered herself and told the best of the gods, 'I am Sharyati's daughter. I am Chyavana's wife and property.' The Ashvins laughed and again told her, 'O fortunate one! Why has your father bestowed someone like you on a man who has already finished his travels?[548] O timid one! You are radiant in this forest like a flash of lightning. O beautiful one! We have not seen someone equal to you even among the gods. If you are adorned with every ornament and attired in excellent garments, you will dazzle even more with your unblemished limbs, and not smeared in dirt like this. Why does someone like you serve a husband who is overcome with age? O beautiful one! Love and desire have deserted him. O one with the sweet smiles! He is not capable of protecting you and sustaining you. Therefore, give up Chyavana. Therefore, accept

one of us as your husband. You are like one born from a divine womb. Do not waste your youth.' Having been thus addressed, Sukanya again told the gods, 'I am devoted to my husband Chyavana. Do not have any doubts about that.' They again told her, 'We are the physicians of the gods. We will make your husband young and beautiful. Then choose a husband from the three of us. O one with the beautiful face! Tell him about this arrangement and bring him here.' O king! At these words, she went to Bhrigu's son and reported this to him. On hearing this, Chyavana told his wife that they should act in that way.

'"On obtaining her husband's permission, she said that the act should be done. On hearing her words that the act should be done, the Ashvins said that her husband should immerse himself in the water. Desirous of becoming handsome, Chyavana swiftly entered the water. O king! O lord! The Ashvins also entered the lake. After an instant had passed, all of them climbed out of the lake. All of them were young and divine in beauty, with dazzling earrings. All of them were equal in beauty, bringing delight to the mind. Then all of them told her together, 'O fortunate one! O blessed one! O beautiful one! Choose one of us for your husband, whomsoever you desire. O one with the beautiful features! Choose whichever one is desired by you.' On seeing all of them standing there, equal in beauty, the lady chose with her own mind and intelligence and chose her own husband.

'"Having obtained a wife and the youthful beauty that he desired, Chyavana happily spoke these words to the greatly energetic Nasatyas. 'You have endowed an aged one with youthful beauty and I have also obtained this lady as my wife. I am pleased with you because you have made me young and I give you the right to drink soma, even in the presence of the king of the gods. I tell you this truthfully.' Having heard this, the two happily returned to heaven. Chyavana and Sukanya sported themselves, like the gods."'

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'Lomasha said, "On learning that Chyavana had become young, Sharyati was delighted and came with his soldiers to visit Bhargava in his hermitage. He saw Chyavana and Sukanya, beautiful like the children of the gods. King Sharyati was as delighted as if he had won the entire earth. With his wife, the lord of the earth was received with honour by the rishi. The king seated himself with the fortunate one[549] and began to converse about weighty matters. Then Bhargava told the king in a conciliatory tone. 'O king! I will perform a sacrifice for you. Arrange for the ingredients.' Sharyati, lord of the earth, was extremely delighted at this. O great king! He welcomed Chyavana's words.

'"On an auspicious day for the sacrifice, Sharyati constructed an excellent sacrificial ground and filled it with every desirable object. O king! It was there that Bhargava Chyavana performed a sacrifice. Hear about the extraordinary events that occurred there. Chyavana grasped a cup of soma then, so as to offer it to the divine Ashvins. But

when he was about to offer the cup, Indra restrained him. Indra said, 'In my view, these two Nasatyas are unworthy of being offered soma. They are the physicians of the gods and their acts make them unworthy of worship.' Chyavana replied, 'They are great in powers. They are great in soul. They are wealthy in beauty and riches. O Maghavan! They have made me young, like the ageless gods. Together with you and the other gods, why should they be unworthy of receiving offerings? O lord of the gods! O Purandara! Know that the Ashvins are also gods.' Indra said, 'These two are physicians and nothing but servants. They can adopt any form they desire. They roam the world of the mortals. How can they be deserving of soma?' Despite Vasava repeating these words, Bhargava paid no heed to Shakra's words and grasped the cup. On seeing that he was about to offer a share of the excellent soma to the Ashvins, the god, who was the destroyer of Bala, spoke these words. 'If you willingly grasp the soma and offer it to them, I will hurl my vajra, supreme and terrible in form, at you.' Having been thus addressed, Bhargava smiled and looked at Indra. Following the procedure, he grasped some excellent soma and offered it to the Ashvins.

'"Then Shachi's husband hurled the vajra, terrible in form, at him. Just as he was about to hurl it, Bhargava paralysed his arm. Having paralysed him, Chyavana uttered mantras and made offerings to the fire. Having succeeded in his objective, the greatly energetic one was about to cause violence to the god. Having decided this, with the strength of his austerities, the sage created a gigantic asura by the name of Mada,[550] great in valour and immense in form. His body was incapable of being measured by the gods or the demons. His mouth was terrible. It was gigantic and full of sharp teeth. One of the jaws rested on earth and the other stretched up to heaven. He had four fangs that extended for ten thousand yojanas. His other fangs extended for ten yojanas. They had forms like walls and looked like the tips of spears. His arms were like mountains and each was ten thousand yojanas long. His eyes resembled the sun and the moon. His mouth looked like death. He licked his mouth with his darting tongue, as fickle as lightning. His mouth was agape and his sight terrifying, as if he was about to swallow up the earth by force. In great rage, he rushed at Shatakratu, as if to devour him. The world resounded from the noise of his great and terrible roar."'

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'Lomasha said, "On seeing Mada, terrible of face and with a gaping mouth like that of death himself, approach with the intention of devouring him, the god Shatakratu licked the corners of his mouth in fear. His arm was paralysed. Oppressed by fear, the king of the gods told Chyavana, 'O Bhargava! From today, the Ashvins will be deserving of soma. O brahmana! I truthfully give you my word. You do not undertake an endeavour that is unsuccessful. Your words are the supreme law. O brahmarshi! I know that you never act out of falsehood. You have decided today that these Ashvins are deserving of

soma offerings. O Bhargava! I engineered this to ensure that the power of your valour might spread once more and so that the fame of Sukanya and her father might spread in the world. Therefore, show your favours to me. Let it be as you wish.' At these words of Shakra, the great-souled Bhargava's wrath was swiftly appeased and he set Purandara free.

'"The valorous one divided Mada and distributed him in drinks, women, gambling and hunting, in which, it had earlier been created again and again. Having thus thrown Mada away, he satisfied Indra with soma and also the Ashvins, together with the other gods. Having performed the sacrifice for the king, the supreme among eloquent ones became famous in the worlds because of his valour and sported with his beloved Sukanya in the forest.

'"O king! His lake shines there, noisy with birds. Together with your brothers, you must offer oblations to the ancestors and the gods there. O protector of the earth! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Having seen this and Sikataksha, you should go to the Saindhava forest and see the streams there. O great king! You should touch the water at all the pushkaras.[551] There is Mount Archika, inhabited by the learned. It is always full of fruit and always has flowing streams. The winds make it the supreme of regions. O Yudhishthira! There are many hundreds of sanctuaries constructed by the thirty gods there. This is the moon's tirtha, worshipped by the rishis, the vaikhanasa rishis and the valakhilyas. There are three sacred peaks and three springs. You can circumambulate them one by one and perform your ablutions, as you desire. O Kounteya! O lord of men! Shantanu, Shunaka and both Nara and Narayana obtained the eternal regions here. O Yudhishthira! The gods and the ancestors always sleep with the maharshis on Mount Archika and perform austerities there. Worship them. O lord of the earth! The rishis prepared the charu there. There is also Yamuna with the eternal currents, where Krishna engaged in austerities. O destroyer of enemies. The twins, Bhimasena, Krishna and we—all of us will go there together, lean and extremely ascetic. O lord of men! This is Indra's sacred stream. Dhata, Vidhata and Varuna ascended upwards there.[552] O king! They dwelt here, forgiving and engaging in supreme dharma. This pure mountain is appropriate for those who are friendly and of upright minds. O king! Here is the Yamuna, frequented by masses of rajarshis. O king! Many sacrifices have been performed here. It is holy and banishes fear of sin. O Kounteya! The great archer, King Mandhata, himself performed a sacrifice here and so did Somaka Sahadeva, supreme among those who gave."'

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'Yudhishthira asked, "Mandhata was a tiger among kings, famous in the three worlds. O great brahmana! How was that supreme of kings, the son of Yuvanashva, born? How

did that infinitely radiant one attain the supreme objective? The three worlds were as much under his control as under the great-souled Vishnu. I wish to hear about the character of that wise one. He was as resplendent as Shakra. How did he obtain the name of Mandhata? How was the one with unmatched valour born? You are a skilled one."[553]

'Lomasha said, "O king! Listen attentively to how that great-souled king came to obtain the name of Mandhata, recounted in the worlds. There was a lord of the earth named Yuvanashva, in the lineage of Ikshvaku. The protector of the earth performed many sacrifices and gave away a lot of stipends. The foremost among those who uphold dharma performed one thousand horse sacrifices and many other sacrifices, in which, there were many stipends. But the rajarshi, great in his soul and firm in his vows, had no sons. He entrusted the kingdom to his ministers and lived permanently in the forest. Contemplating his own soul, he engaged in the rules laid down in the sacred texts.

'"Once, his heart was dry with thirst and he entered Bhrigu's hermitage. O Indra among kings! On that night, the great-souled maharshi, who was Bhrigu's son, performed a sacrifice so that Soudyumni[554] might obtain a son. Mantras were recited over water and a large pot was filled with this. O Indra among kings! It had been established there earlier, so that his wife might drink it and give birth to a son who was Shakra's equal. The maharshis had placed the pot on the altar. Exhausted as a result of staying up at night, they had gone to sleep. Soudyumni passed them. The king's throat was parched from thirst and he was desperate for a drink. He was exhausted. On entering the hermitage, he asked for a drink. Because he was tired, his throat was dry and no one heard him. His tone was like a bird's notes. On seeing the pot filled with water, the king swiftly ran towards it. Having drunk the cold water, the intelligent king's thirst was quenched and he was happy. He threw the rest of the water away and slept.

'"Later, the rishis awoke, along with the lord of men. On seeing that the pot was empty of water, all of them assembled together and asked, 'Who has done this?' Yuvanashva truthfully replied, 'It was I.' The illustrious Bhargava then said, 'This was not right. After austerities, this water had been collected for the sake of your son. O rajarshi! I performed terrible austerities in the name of the brahman, so that you might have an immensely strong and valorous son and passed it on.[555] He would have been immensely strong and immensely valorous and would have been full of the power of austerities. His valour would have been such that he would even have sent Shakra to Yama's abode. O king! These were the rituals through which the water had been prepared by me. O king! Your drinking the water today is not an act that should have been done. But it is now impossible to reverse the deed that has been done. What you have done must certainly have been decreed by destiny. Because you were thirsty, you drank water that had been sanctified with rites and mantras. O great king! That water

was infused with my power and austerities. Therefore, you will yourself give birth to a son with these characteristics. We will perform the rites and sacrifices for you so that this supremely extraordinary event may occur and a valorous son, the equal of Shakra, is born.' Then one hundred years passed. The left side of the great-souled king was rent asunder and a son emerged, extremely energetic like the sun. But Yuvanashva, the lord of men, did not die and this was certainly extraordinary.

'"The immensely energetic Shakra came there to see him and Shakra inserted his own forefinger into the child's mouth. The wielder of the vajra said, 'He will suck me.' Then Indra and the other gods named him Mandhata.[556] O protector of the earth! Having sucked the forefinger offered by Shakra, the child grew to thirteen cubits.[557] O great king! The knowledge of the Vedas, together with that of dhanurveda and that of all the divine weapons, appeared before this lord at the instant that he thought about them. The bow named Ajagava, arrows made of horn and impenetrable armour instantly followed his commands. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Maghavan Shakra himself instated him. He conquered the three worlds with his dharma, like Vishnu in his valour.[558] The great-souled one's realm[559] was unobstructed. Gems flowed to the rajarshi of their own accord. O lord of the earth! This earth, with all its riches, belonged to him. He performed many varied sacrifices and gave away abundant stipends. O king! Having erected many sanctuaries in accordance and acquired abundant dharma, that immensely energetic and greatly radiant one obtained half of Shakra's kingdom. In a single day, the wise one, always with dharma, brought the entire earth, with all its habitations and stores of jewels, under his control. O great king! The four corners of the earth are covered with his sacrificial grounds, where he performed sacrifices with donations. There is no spot that was not covered. O great king! It is said that the great-souled one gave brahmanas ten thousand *padmas*[560] of cattle. When there was a drought for twelve years, the great-souled one made it rain, so that the crops might grow, while the one with the vajra in his hand,[561] looked on. The great king of Gandhara was born in the lunar dynasty. But with a roar like that of the giant clouds, he killed him with his sharp arrows.[562] O king! The great-souled one subjugated the four types of beings. Through his austerities and energy, he established the worlds. This is the place where he, as radiant as the sun, offered sacrifices to the gods. Behold this sacred region, in the middle of Kurukshetra. O protector of the earth! I have narrated to you everything about the great character of Mandhata and his wonderful birth, about which you had asked me."'

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'Yudhishthira asked, "O supreme among eloquent ones! What was the valour of King

Somaka? I wish to hear accurately about his deeds and his powers."

'Lomasha said, "O Yudhishthira! There was a king named Somaka, devoted to dharma. O king! He had one hundred wives, all equal to one another. Though he made great efforts, a son was not born to the lord of the earth, despite a long period of time having passed. One day, after he had grown old and continued to make efforts, a son named Jantu was born to him from those one hundred wives. O lord of the earth! When he was born, all those mothers surrounded him and always gave him everything that might bring him pleasure. One day, an ant bit Jantu on his hips and the child cried out in pain at this bite. Then all the mothers were extremely distressed. They surrounded Jantu and raised a great lamentation. The lord of the earth suddenly heard these loud cries, while he was seated in the midst of his advisers and priests. The king sent for news about what had occurred and the steward brought him news about what had happened to his son. Somaka swiftly arose with his advisers and went to the inner quarters. The chastiser of enemies consoled his son. Having consoled his son, the king emerged from the inner quarters. O king! He sat down with his advisers and priests.

'"Somaka said, 'Shame on having a single son. It is better to have none. All beings are always prone to distress and a single son is cause for misery. O brahmana! O lord![563] I examined these one hundred wives and married them for the sake of obtaining sons. But they did not produce offspring. As I endeavoured with all of them, somehow this single son named Jantu was born. What can be greater misery than that? O supreme among brahmanas! My time has passed and so has that of my wives.[564] Their lives are dependent on this single son and that is also the way for me. Isn't there some ceremony or deed, large, small or difficult, so that I can obtain one hundred sons?' The officiating priest replied, 'There is such a deed, so as to obtain one hundred sons. O Somaka! If you can perform it, I will explain it to you.' Somaka said, 'Whether it is a good deed or a bad one, if it can get me one hundred sons, know that I will perform it. O illustrious one! Explain it to me.' The officiating priest replied, 'O king! I will perform the rite and you will sacrifice Jantu. Then, within a short while, one hundred fortunate sons will be born. When he is offered in the sacrifice, his mothers will inhale the smoke and all of them will give birth to extremely valorous sons. Jantu will also be born as your son from the same woman. A golden mark will be seen on his left side.'""

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'"Somaka said, 'O brahmana! Whatever needs to be done, in whichever way, let it be done accordingly. In a desire to obtain sons, I will do everything that you ask me to.'"

'Lomasha said, "Then Somaka peformed a sacrifice and offered Jantu. Out of affection for their son, the mothers forcibly tugged at him and cried out, 'Alas! We are dead!' Overcome with great distress, the mothers grasped him by his right hand. But the

officiating priest grasped him by the left hand and pulled. As they screamed like female ospreys, he dragged their son away. Following the prescribed rites, he offered him as an oblation into the fire. O descendant of the Kuru lineage! As the offering was made, the distressed mothers inhaled the smoke and suddenly fell down on the ground. All the king's women then conceived. O lord of the earth! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! After ten months had passed, a total of one hundred sons were born to all of them and Somaka. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Jantu was the eldest and he was born to his former mother. They loved him more than their own sons. He had the golden mark on his left side. Among those one hundred sons, he was the best in terms of qualities.

'"Then Somaka's preceptor[565] went to the supreme world and after some time had passed, Somaka also followed him there. He saw him[566] being cooked in a terrible hell and asked, 'O brahmana! Why are you being cooked in this hell?' Then the preceptor, who was being cooked in terrible fires, told him, 'O king! I sacrificed for your sake and these are the fruits of that deed.' Having heard this, the rajarshi told Dharmaraja,[567] 'I will enter this place. Set my priest free. This immensely fortunate one is being cooked in the fires of hell because of my deed.' Dharma replied, 'O king! No one ever obtains the fruits of someone else's action. O supreme among givers! Behold! Your fruits are there.' Somaka said, 'Without this one, learned about the brahman, I do not desire these sacred worlds. I only desire to dwell with him, be it in the abode of the gods, or in hell. O Dharmaraja! My deed is identical with his. O god! Therefore, the merits or the demerits should be equal.' Dharma replied, 'O king! If that is your desire, then suffer those fruits with him, for an equal length of time. Later, you will obtain the objective of the virtuous.' Then the lotus-eyed king did all that. He was the beloved of his preceptor. Together with his brahmana preceptor, and by virtue of his own deeds, he again obtained the radiant worlds. This is his sacred hermitage, radiant before us. A man who controls himself and spends six nights here, obtains the end of the virtuous. O Indra among kings! O extender of the Kuru lineage! Devoid of fever, and controlling our souls, we must spend six nights here. Ready yourself."'

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'Lomasha said, "O king! It is said that Prajapati himself sacrificed here in ancient times. That sacrifice, named *ishtikrita*, lasted for one thousand years. Ambarisha, the son of Nabhaga, performed a sacrifice on the banks of the Yamuna. Through his sacrifices and austerities, he attained the supreme objective. This is the region where King Nahusha[568] performed an extremely holy sacrifice and gave away ten padmas to the assisting priests. O Kounteya! The immensely energetic Yayati was a universal emperor who rivalled Shakra. Behold his sacrificial ground there. See how the ground is spiked with many different kinds of sacrificial altars and seems to sink down, under the weight of

Yayati's sacrificial deeds. Here is a *shami* tree[569] with a single leaf. There is a supreme sanctuary. Behold Rama's[570] lake. Behold Narayana's hermitage. O lord of the earth! This is the path followed by Richika's immensely energetic son[571] when he traversed the earth, immersed in yoga, on the banks of the stream Roupya.

'"O descendant of the Kuru lineage! When I recited this genealogy, listen to what a pishacha woman, adorned with *ulukhalas*,[572] once said. 'Eat curds in Yugandhara.[573] Spend the night in Achyutasthala. Then bathe in Bhutilaya and dwell there with your sons. After having spent one night there, if you stay for a second night, then the deeds of the day will be different from the deeds of the night.'[574] O supreme among the Bharata lineage! O Kounteya! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Therefore, we will stay here tonight. This is Kurukshetra's gate. O king! It is here that King Yayati Nahusha performed sacrifices where many jewels were given away, and Indra was delighted. This is Plakshavatarana, the supreme tirtha on the Yamuna. The learned ones say that it is the gate to the vault of heaven. The supreme rishis performed sarasvata sacrifices here. O son! With their sacrificial stakes and mortars, they then went to take their final baths. Following dharma, King Bharata performed a horse sacrifice right here and let loose a black sacrificial steed to roam the earth. It was here that Marutta, tiger among men, performed a supreme sacrifice and seated himself, protected by Samvarta, foremost among devarshis. O Indra among kings! Bathe here and you will be able to see all the worlds. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Having touched the water here, you will be cleansed of all evil deeds."'

Vaishampayana said, 'Having bathed there with his brothers and having been worshipped by the great rishis, the foremost among the Pandavas then spoke these words to Lomasha. "I can see all the worlds through my austerities. O one for whom truth is valour! From here, I can also see the foremost among the Pandavas,[575] with his white steeds." Lomasha replied, "O mighty-armed one! That is true. Thus do the great rishis see. Look at the sacred Sarasvati, crowded by those for whom she is a refuge. O best of men! By bathing here, you will be cleansed of all sins. The celestial rishis performed the sarasvata sacrifice here. O Kounteya! So did the rishis and the rajarshis. This is Prajapati's altar, extending five yojanas in every direction. This is the field of the great-souled sacrificer Kuru."'[576]

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'Lomasha said, "O descendant of the Bharata lineage! If mortals perform austerities here, they go to heaven. O king! Men who desire to die, come here by the thousands. In ancient times, a benediction was pronounced by Daksha when he sacrificed here. 'The men who die here will have conquered heaven.' This is the sacred, divine and flowing

river Sarasvati. O lord of the earth! This is Sarasvati's Vinashana. This is the gate to the land of the nishadas. O brave one! It is out of hatred for them that the Sarasvati enters the earth, so that the nishadas may not know her. This is Chamasodbheda,[577] where the Sarasvati can be seen. All the sacred and divine rivers that go towards the ocean merge into her here. O destroyer of enemies! This is the great tirtha known as Sindhu, where Lopamudra went to Agastya and accepted him for her husband. O one who shines like the sun! This is the dazzling tirtha of Prabhasa. This is sacred and holy, the cleanser of sin, and is favoured by Indra. The supreme tirtha by the name of Vishnupada can be seen there. Here is the extremely sacred and beautiful river Vipasha.[578] Because of sorrow for his sons, the illustrious rishi Vasishtha tied himself up and threw himself down, arising again, freed of his bonds.[579]

'"O destroyer of enemies! Behold, with your brothers, the region of Kashmira,[580] sacred in every way and frequented by maharshis. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! It is here that a conversation took place between all the rishis from the northern region, Nahusha,[581] Agni and Kashyapa. O great king! The gate to Manasa[582] is evident here. In the midst of this mountain, the illustrious Rama[583] created a region for the rainwater to flow. This is the renowned Vatikashanda, where valour comes from truth. It is to the north of Videha and its gate cannot be breached. This is the auspicious place named Ujjanaka, where sacrifices of barley were made and where the illustrious rishi Vasishtha lived with Arundhati. This is the lake named Kushavan, where there are one trillion[584] beds of kusha grass. Rukimini's[585] hermitage is here and she conquered her anger and found peace here. O Pandava! O great king! You have heard of the great mountain Bhrigutunga, where meditations assemble. You will see it and the rivers Jala and Upajala, near the Yamuna. Performing a sacrifice there, Ushinara surpassed Vasava. O lord of the earth! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! To know whether the king was an equal of the gods, Vasava and Agni came there. To test the great-souled Ushinara and desirous of granting him a boon, Indra became a hawk and Agni became a dove and came to his sacrifice. As a result of fear from the hawk, the dove alighted on the king's thigh, seeking refuge there. O king! Oppressed by fear, it nestled there."'

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'"The hawk said, 'All the kings of the earth say that you have dharma in your soul. Why do you therefore perform a deed that is against all dharma? O king! I am suffering from hunger and this is my decreed food. Do not protect it out of avarice for dharma. Otherwise, you will discard dharma.'

'"The king replied, 'O great bird! This bird is terrified out of fear for you and has sought shelter. To protect its life, it has sought refuge with me. O hawk! Do you not see

that it is supreme *adharma* for me to give up this dove, which has sought refuge from fear? O hawk! It can be seen that this dove is agitated and trembling. It has come to me for its life. Giving it up merits condemnation.'

'"The hawk said, 'O lord of the earth! All beings sustain themselves through food. They prosper through food and live because of food. One can live for many nights after giving up objects that are difficult to discard. But one cannot live for a long time after giving up food. O lord of the earth! If I am deprived of my food, my life will give up my body and tread the path from which one does not return.[586] O one with dharma in your soul! After my death, my son and wife will perish. While protecting the dove, you are not protecting many lives. Dharma that stands in the way of another dharma is not dharma at all. It is evil dharma. O one for whom valour is based on truth! Dharma that does not conflict with anything is the right dharma. O lord of the earth! When there is a conflict, you must decide in accordance with what is important and what is unimportant. That should be dharma where there is no conflict. O king! After measuring the important with the unimportant and determining what constitutes dharma, and what does not constitute dharma, you must decide that to be dharma which is weightier and act accordingly.'

'"The king replied, 'O supreme bird! Your words seem to bring much welfare. Are you Suparna,[587] king of the birds? There is no doubt that you are conversant with dharma. You have spoken many attractive words, full of dharma. I do not see anything that is not evident to you. Then how can you think it virtuous to discard someone who has sought refuge? O bird! All your efforts are to get food. You are capable of appeasing your hunger through other food, that which is more plentiful. For your sake, I will now cook whatever you desire—cow, bull, boar, deer or buffalo.'

'"The hawk said, 'O great king! I do not desire a boar, a bull, a deer or anything else. I do not eat them. What use are they to me now? O bull among the kshatriyas! O protector of the earth! Give up the food that has been earmarked for me by destiny. Release the dove. It is the eternal rule that hawks eat doves. O king! Not knowing a plantain tree, do not climb it.'[588]

'"The king replied, 'O one who is worshipped by masses of birds! Rule over this prosperous kingdom of Shibi. O hawk! Alternatively, I will give you everything that you desire. O hawk! But I will not give up the bird that has sought refuge with me. O supreme bird! Tell me what deed I must perform so that you give this up. I will not give up this small bird.'

'"The hawk said, 'O Ushinara! O lord of men! If you have so much affection for the dove, then cut some flesh from your body and weigh it, so that it is equal to the dove. O king! When your flesh is equal to the dove, you can give it to me and I will find satisfaction.'

'"The king replied, 'O hawk! I think this request of yours is a favour. I will right now

give you an equal amount of my own flesh.'"

'Lomasha said, "O Kounteya! The king was learned in supreme dharma. The illustrious one cut his own flesh and weighed it against the dove. When he found that the dove was heavier than this flesh, King Ushinara again cut some more flesh and gave it. Thus, there was no more flesh left to weigh against the dove. Having given up all the flesh, he himself ascended the scales."

'"The hawk said, 'O one learned in dharma! I am Indra and that dove is the bearer of the sacrificial offerings.[589] We came to your sacrificial grounds to test you about dharma. O lord of the earth! This deed of yours, your cutting off flesh from your body, will be resplendent in the world. O king! As long as men talk in this world, so long will your eternal deed be established in this world.'"

'Lomasha said, "O Pandava! Behold the seat of that great-souled king. It is sacred and the cleanser of all sins. Look at it with me. O king! It is here that the gods and the eternal sages are always seen by brahmanas, who are great-souled and performers of holy deeds."'

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'Lomasha said, "O Indra among men! Behold the sacred hermitage of Shvetaketu, the son of Uddalaka, whose fame as a knower of mantras was recounted on earth. It always has trees full of fruit. Shvetaketu saw Sarasvati herself there, in her human form. When Sarasvati appeared, Shvetaketu told her, 'Give me the power of speech.' O king! At that time, Ashtavakra, the son of Kahoda, and Shvetaketu, the son of Uddalaka, were the foremost among those who knew the brahman and were uncle and nephew. Uncle and nephew, the illustrious brahmanas, went to the sacrifice of King Videha, lord of earth. They vanquished the immeasurable Bandi in a debate."

'Yudhishthira asked, "What was the power of the brahmana who thus vanquished Bandi? Why was he born as Ashtavakra? O Lomasha! Tell me everything accurately."

'Lomasha replied, "Uddalaka had a self-controlled disciple. O king! He was known by the name of Kahoda. He served his preceptor and was devoted to him. He studied for a long time. There were many brahmanas who served as disciples. But the preceptor knew him to be the one. He gave him all his knowledge and his daughter Sujata as a wife. She conceived and the child, who was radiant as the fire, spoke to his studious father. 'You have studied all night. O father! But you are not right.' The maharshi was insulted among his own students. He cursed the child who was still inside the womb. 'Since you spoke while you were still inside, you will be crooked in eight ways.' He was born exactly as had been spoken and this maharshi became famous as Ashtavakra.[590] His maternal uncle was Shvetaketu, who was equal to him in age. While her son grew inside her, Sujata was extremely distressed. She was poor and desired riches. In a conciliatory

tone, she privately spoke to her husband. 'O maharshi! What will we do without riches? The tenth month is upon me. You have no riches. Once the delivery takes place, how will we overcome the calamity that confronts us?' Having been thus addressed by his wife, Kahoda went to Janaka for riches. Bandi was skilled in debate. The brahmana was defeated by him and drowned in the waters.

'"Uddalaka got to know that he had been defeated by a suta[591] and had drowned in the waters. He told Sujata, 'This must be kept a secret from Ashtavakra.' She kept this secret extremely well. When he was born, the brahmana heard nothing and thought that Uddalaka was his father and Shvetaketu was his brother. When Ashtavakra was twelve years old, Shvetaketu saw him seated on his father's lap.[592] He grasped him by the hand and told the weeping one, 'This is not your father's lap.' These harsh words pierced his heart and remained there, making him extremely unhappy. Weeping, he went home and asked his mother, 'Where is my father?' Sujata was extremely distressed. Scared of being cursed, she told him everything. Having got to know everything from his mother, the brahmana[593] spoke to Shvetaketu. 'Let us go to King Janaka's sacrifice. It has been heard that his sacrifice has many extraordinary things. We will hear debates among the brahmanas. We will also eat excellent food. We will become wiser. The chants of the brahman are auspicious and pacifying.' Thus, the maternal uncle and nephew went to King Janaka's prosperous sacrifice. Ashtavakra encountered the king on the road and was restrained.[594] He spoke these words to him."'[595]

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'"Ashtavakra said, 'The road belongs to a blind one. The road belongs to a deaf one. The road belongs to a woman. The road belongs to a bearer of loads. The road belongs to a king. But when a brahmana is encountered on the way, the road must belong to the brahmana.'

'"The king replied, 'Then I now give up this road to you. Travel whichever way you desire. There is no fire that is a minor one.[596] Even Indra always bows down before brahmanas.'

'"Ashtavakra said, 'O son![597] We have come to see the sacrifice. Our curiousity cannot be greater. We have come as guests. Let us enter. O gatekeeper! We are waiting for your command. We wish to see the sacrifice of Indradyumna's son.[598] We wish to see and speak to King Janaka. O gatekeeper! We are being consumed with anger and let that not cause affliction to you.'

'"The gatekeeper said, 'We are bound by the commands of Bandi. "Listen to the words I utter.[599] No brahmanas who are children will be allowed entry. Only the old and the learned, the best of brahmanas will be allowed to enter."'

'"Ashtavakra replied, 'O gatekeeper! If entry is allowed to the aged, then I have a right to enter. We are aged because we have observed vows. We have a right to enter because of our knowledge of the Vedas. We have served[600] and are in control of our senses. We have faithfully trodden the path of knowledge. It is said that children should not be slighted. If touched, a young fire also burns.'

'"The gatekeeper said, 'If you know, recite the single-syllabled and many-formed verse invoking Sarasvati. Look at your limbs. You are a child. Do not boast. It is difficult to obtain success in debates.'

'"Ashtavakra replied, 'Age cannot be deduced from the growth of the body, just as the number of knots on a *shalmali* tree[601] does not indicate its age. Whether it is short or small in form, it is aged because it is full of fruit. A tree without fruit has no traits of age.'

'"The gatekeeper said, 'The young receive intelligence from the old, and in due course of time, become aged too. It is impossible to obtain learning in a short time. Therefore, despite being a child, why do you speak as if aged?'

'"Ashtavakra replied, 'One does not become old because one's hair has turned white. The gods know that, a child who is learned is old. The rishis have not decreed that the merit of dharma depends on years, grey hair, riches or relatives.[602] "One who has learning is great."[603] I have come here to meet Bandi in the king's presence. Go and announce this now to the king who is garlanded with lotuses. O gatekeeper! Today, you will witness me engaged in a debate with the learned. I may become superior, or I may become inferior, when all the others become silent today.'

'"The gatekeeper said, 'You are only ten years old. How can you enter a sacrifice reserved for entry to the humble and the learned? I will have to devise a means for you to enter. But you must take due care.'

'"Ashtavakra said, 'O king! O supreme among those of the Janaka lineage! You are worthy of praise. You have all the riches. You are the performer of sacrificial deeds, like King Yayati was the only one in ancient times. We have heard that the wise Bandi, after defeating those who know the Vedas in debate, employs your servants to immerse those broken ones in water. Having heard this from the brahmanas, I have come here today to engage in debate. Where is Bandi? Where can I find him? I will destroy him today, like the sun causing the stars to fade.'

'"The king replied, 'You hope to vanquish Bandi without knowing the other's power with words. Those who know his powers are incapable of speaking thus. He has been tested by brahmanas skilled in debate.'

'"Ashtavakra said, 'Those who debated were not like me. That made him like a lion and he roars thus. When he meets me today, he will be destroyed, like a cart on the road with its axle broken.'

'"The king replied, 'He alone is supremely wise who knows what has six parts, twelve axles, twenty-four segments and three hundred and sixty spokes.'

'"Ashtavakra said, 'May the wheel[604] with twenty-four segments, six parts, twelve axles and three hundred and sixty spokes always protect you.'

'"The king asked, 'They are joined like horses and descend like hawks. Who among the gods gives them birth and who do they give birth to?'

'"Ashtavakra said, 'O king! Let them steer away from your house and even from the houses of your enemies. The one with the wind as a charioteer gives them birth and they also give birth to him.'[605]

'"The king asked, 'What does not close its eyes when it sleeps? What does not move when it is born? What has no heart? What increases in speed when force is imposed?'

'"Ashtavakra said, 'A fish does not close its eyes when it sleeps. An egg does not move when it is born. A stone has no heart. A river increases in speed when force is imposed.'

'"The king replied, 'I do not think that you are a man. You possess divine energy. You are not a child. I regard you as aged. There is no one who is your equal in the power of words. Therefore, I am throwing the gate open. There is Bandi.'"'

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'"Ashtavakra said, 'O king! There are kings who are assembled here, unrivalled in power, with their dreadful armies. The ones who debate, like swans cackling in a great expanse of water, should not find a means of escape. You pride yourself on being a great debater.[606] When you engage with me today, you will not flow like a river's current. O Bandi! My energy will blaze like fire on kindling. Stand firm before me today.'

'"Bandi replied, 'Do not awaken a sleeping tiger. The virulent snake is licking its mouth. If you kick it on the head with your feet, you will not excape. Be sure that you will be bitten. The extremely weak man is insolent and strikes a mountain, only to lacerate his hands and nails himself. No wounds can be seen on the mountain. Like all mountains before Mainaka, like calves before a bull, all the other kings are inferior to the king of Mithila.'"

'Lomasha said, "Ashtavakra roared in that assembly. O king! His wrath was aroused and he spoke to Bandi. 'Tell me the answer to my question. I will tell you the answer to your question.'"

'"Bandi said, 'There is only one fire, but it is kindled in many forms. There is only one sun that illuminates everything. There is only one warrior and slayer, the king of the gods. There is only one Yama, the lord of the ancestors.'

'"Ashtavakra replied, 'Indra and Agni roam together, as friends. There are two devarshis, Narada and Parvata. There are two Ashvins. There are two wheels to a

chariot. As decreed by the creator, wife and husband live together.'

'"Bandi said, 'Beings are born thrice as a result of their deeds.[607] The *vajapeya* is united with three.[608] Thrice do the *adhvaryus* perform the act of pressing.[609] It is said that there are three worlds and three sources of light.'[610]

'"Ashtavakra replied, 'There are four stages of life for a brahmana.[611] Four are required to complete the sacrifice. There are four directions and four varnas. It has always been said that cows have four feet.'[612]

'"Bandi said, 'There are five fires.[613] The *pankti* has five feet.[614] There are five sacrifices.[615] There are five organs of sense. It has been seen in the Vedas that apsaras have five tufts of hair.[616] There are five sacred rivers in the world.'[617]

'"Ashtavakra replied, 'When the sacrificial fire is prepared, six cows are the dakshina. There are six seasons in the wheel of time. There are six organs of sense.[618] There are six in Krittika.[619] It has been seen in all the Vedas that there are six *sadasykas*.'[620]

'"Bandi said, 'There are seven kinds of domestic animals and seven that are wild.[621] There are seven meters that carry the sacrifice.[622] There are seven rishis.[623] There are seven forms of offering homage.[624] The veena is known to have seven strings.'

'"Ashtavakra replied, 'Eight *shanas* bear a hundred.[625] Sharabha, the destroyer of the lion, has eight feet.[626] We have heard that among the gods, there is a class of eight Vasus. In all sacrifices, the sacrificial post has eight corners.'

'"Bandi said, 'When kindling sacrifices for the ancestors, nine verses are used. It is said that there are nine stages in creation. The brihati meter has nine syllables. Nine digits are always used in calculations.'[627]

'"Ashtavakra replied, 'In the world of men, it has been said that there are ten stages.[628] It has been said that a thousand is made up of ten complete hundreds. A woman who has conceived bears for ten months. There are ten Dasherakas, Dashas and Dasharnas.'[629]

'"Bandi said, 'Eleven animals are used in the *ekadashi* rite.[630] There are eleven sacrificial stakes. There are eleven changes in the breath of life.[631] It has been said that there are eleven Rudras among the gods.'

'"Ashtavakra replied, 'It has been said that there are twelve months in a year. The jagati meter is formed out of twelve syllables. It has been said that an ordinary sacrifice lasts for twelve days. The brahmanas say that there are twelve Adityas.'

'"Bandi said, 'It has been said that the thirteenth lunar day is terrible. The earth is formed out of thirteen islands …'"[632]

'Lomasha said, "Having said this, Bandi fell silent. Then Ashtavakra completed the

other half of the shloka. Keshi travelled for thirteen days.[633] It has been said that the *atichhanda* meter has thirteen syllables." At that, when they saw that the suta's son had fallen silent, a loud applause arose. His head was lowered and he was immersed in thought. But Ashtavakra went on reciting. In King Janaka's grand sacrifice, there was a tremendous uproar. Hands joined in salutation, all the brahmanas went to Ashtavakra and worshipped him.

'"Ashtavakra said, 'I have heard that, vanquishing learned brahmanas in debate, this one immersed them in water. Let Bandi follow the same dharma today. Seize him and immerse him also.'

'"Bandi said, 'I am the son of King Varuna. O Janaka! A sacrifice that will last for twelve years is taking place, equal in duration to your sacrifice. Therefore, I have sent the foremost brahmanas there. All of them had gone to witness Varuna's sacrifice. But behold. They are returning. I worship the venerable Ashtavakra. Because of him, I will join the one who gave me birth.'

'"Ashtavakra replied, 'You immersed brahmanas in the water of the ocean. Though they were learned and intelligent, they lost in debate. I have now rescued their speech through my learning. Let the learned examine these words. Jataveda[634] Agni knows the houses of the learned and does not consume them. Thus the learned examine the words that are spoken, even if they are uttered by children, sons and those to be pitied. Has your energy become lean because of *shleshmataki*?[635] Or is that flattery has intoxicated you? You are like an elephant that has been goaded. O Janaka! You are hearing. But you are not paying attention to these words of mine.'

'"Janaka said, 'I am listening to your words. They are divine in form and superhuman. Your form is also celestial. Since you have vanquished Bandi in debate today, Bandi is yours, to do as you desire.'

'"Ashtavakra replied, 'O king! I have no use for Bandi alive. If Varuna is his father, immerse him in the water.'

'"Bandi said, 'I am the son of King Varuna. I have no fear from being immersed in the water. Ashtavakra will soon see his father Kahoda, who had been destroyed a long time ago.'"'[636]

'Lomasha said, "Then Varuna's great-souled son showed homage to all the brahmanas. All of them arose and approached Janaka. Kahoda said, 'O Janaka! It is for this reason that men desire sons who will perform deeds. My son has performed the deed that I was unable to. O Janaka! To a weak one may be born a strong son, to a foolish one an intelligent one and to an ignorant one a wise one.' Bandi said, 'O king! May you be fortunate. Yama will use your sharp axe to chop off the heads of your enemies. At this sacrifice of King Janaka's, there were great recitations and the best of sama hymns were sung. Soma was drunk in copious amounts at the sacrifice. Delighted in heart, the gods

themselves partook of their sacred shares.' O king! When all the brahmanas arose, more resplendent than they had been before, Bandi obtained King Janaka's permission and entered the waters of the ocean. Ashtavakra showed homage to his father. As is proper, he was worshipped by the brahmanas. Having vanquished the Bandi, he returned to the best of hermitages with his uncle. O Kounteya! Therefore, with your brothers and with the brahmanas, dwell here happily. O Ajamidha! With me, you will then go to other sacred places, devoted and pure in your deeds."'

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'Lomasha said, "O king! Madhuvila Samanga can be seen here.[637] This is the place where Bharata[638] bathed, known by the name of Kardamila. After Shachi's husband killed Vritra, we have heard that he was struck by misfortune.[639] He was cleansed of all his sins after bathing in Samanga. O bull among men! This is the place where Mainaka sunk into the earth. In ancient times, Aditi cooked food here, so as to obtain sons. O bull among men! Ascend this king of mountains and dispel your ill fame and misfortune, incapable of being expressed in words. O king! These are the Kankhala mountains, loved by the rishis. O Yudhishthira! The great river Ganga is resplendent here. In ancient times, the illustrious Sanatkumara obtained success here. O Ajamidha! By bathing here, you will be cleansed of all your sins. O Kounteya! With your advisers, silently touch the waters of this lake, known as Punya, the mountain Bhrigutunga and the Ganga. The beautiful hermitage of Sthulasirasa is there. O Kounteya! Discard all sense of ego and anger. O Pandava! The beautiful hermitage of Raibhya is resplendent here. The wise Yavakrita, Bharadvaja's son, died there."

'Yudhishthira asked, "What powers did the rishi who was Bharadvaja's son possess? Why did the sage's son, Yavakrita, die? I wish to hear all this exactly as it happened. O Lomasha! I find delight in listening to the deeds of those who were equals of the gods."

'Lomasha said, "Bharadvaja and Raibhya were friends. They lived here happily, in the interior of the forest and in great friendship. Raibhya had two sons named Arvavasu and Paravasu. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Bharadvaja had a son named Yavakrita. Raibhya and his sons were learned. The other one[640] was an ascetic. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Right from childhood, their friendship was unparalleled. Yavakrita noticed that his father was an ascetic and received no honours. O unblemished one! But Raibhya and his sons were honoured by brahmanas. The energetic one was tormented by this and became overcome with anger. O Pandava! He performed terrible austerities in order to obtain knowledge of the Vedas. He burnt his body in a gigantic and flaming fire. The great ascetic generated anxiety in Indra's mind. O Yudhishthira! Indra went to Yavakrita and asked him, 'Why are you engaged in these supreme torments?' Yavakrita replied, 'O one who is worshipped by the masses of gods!

I am performing this supreme austerity so that the Vedas, studied by brahmanas, become manifest in me. O chastiser of Paka! My efforts are for my own knowledge. O Koushika![641] O illustrious one! The knowledge of the Vedas must be acquired from a preceptor and take a long time. Therefore, I am engaged in this great endeavour.' Indra replied, 'O brahmana rishi! This is not the path for you. This is not the road you wish to traverse. O brahmana! Why do you wish to destroy yourself? Go and learn from a preceptor's mouth.'

'"O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Having spoken these words, Shakra left. Yavakrita, whose valour was infinite, also left and once again engaged in austerities. O king! We have heard that with his terrible and great austerities, he caused great distress to the king of the gods. He was burnt by the terrible austerities of the great sage. The god who was the slayer of Bala came to restrain him again. 'The goal that you have set for yourself is not possible. You have not thought properly about how the knowledge of the Vedas can be manifested to you and your father.' Yavakrita replied, 'O king of the gods! If I do not succeed in my desired objective through these deeds, I will torment myself with greater austerities and engage in greater vows. O Maghavan! O king of the gods! Listen. If you do not satisfy my desires, everything that I wish for, I will slice off my limbs and offer them into the fire.' On realizing that the great-souled sage's resolution was firm, the intelligent and wise one thought of a means of restraining him.

'"Then Indra assumed the form of a brahmana ascetic, who was several hundred years old, feeble and overcome with consumption. He began to construct a bridge of sand on the Bhagirathi, at the tirtha where Yavakrita used to go for his ablutions. Since that supreme of brahmanas had not paid any heed to his words, Shakra sought to fill up the Ganga with scoops of sand. He filled his fists with sand and threw them into the Bhagirathi. Shakra attempted to construct the bridge so as to attract Yavakrita's attention. When Yavakrita, bull among sages, saw his attempts to bind up the river, he broke into loud laughter and uttered these words. 'O brahmana! What is going on? What do you wish to do? Why are you expending this great endeavour on this fruitless objective?' Indra replied, 'When I have bound up the Ganga through a bridge, it will be easy to cross. O son! People suffer great difficulties when they repeatedly try to cross it.' Yavakrita said, 'It is not possible to bind this mighty torrent. Refrain from that which is impossible and embark on something that is possible.' Indra replied, 'I have embarked on this task, just as you have embarked on austerities for the Vedas, a burden of mortification that is impossible to accomplish.' Yavakrita said, 'O lord of the thirty gods! O chastiser of Paka! If you think that my endeavours are as fruitless as yours, then tell me what you think is possible for me. O lord of the masses of gods! Favour me with boons so that I become superior to others.' Then Indra granted the boons the great ascetic asked for. 'As you desire, the Vedas will become manifest in you and your father. All your other desires will also be satisfied. O Yavakrita! You can go now.' Having

attained his objective, he went to his father and said …”’

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‘“Yavakrita said, ‘O father! The Vedas will become manifest in both you and me. I have obtained other boons through which we will be superior to others.’

‘“Bharadvaja replied, ‘O son! Since you have obtained all the boons that you desired, you must be proud. But once you are filled with pride, you will soon be miserably destroyed. O son! On this, an account recited by the gods is cited. In ancient times, there was a valorous sage by the name of Valadhi. He was afflicted by grief over his son and engaged in difficult austerities so that he might obtain a son who was immortal. He obtained this. But though the gods showed him their favours, they did not make him the equal of the immortals. “A mortal one can never be immortal and life must be subject to causes.”[642] Valadhi said, “O supreme among the gods! These mountains have been established for an eternal time and are indestructible. They will determine my son’s span of life.”[643] Later, a son was born to him. His name was Medhavi and he was prone to anger. Having heard about his origins, he became insolent and insulted the rishis. He roamed the earth, causing injury to the sages. Then he met the immensely energetic and intelligent Dhanushaksha. Medhavi insulted him and the valorous one cursed him. “Be reduced to ashes.” But at these words, he was not reduced to ashes. On seeing that Medhavi was not hurt, the valorous Dhanukaksha caused the determinant of his life to be shattered by buffaloes. When the determinant was destroyed, the child instantly died. The father grasped his dead son and began to lament. On seeing him loudly lament in great misery, all the ancient sages who were learned in the Vedas, recited a verse. Listen to it. “Under no circumstances, can one who is mortal change his destiny. Dhanushaksha shattered the mountains with buffaloes.” Having thus obtained boons, young ascetics are filled with pride and swiftly meet their destruction. Do not become like them. Raibhya is immensely valorous and his sons are like that. O son! Therefore, be careful that you do not cross him. O son! If he is angered, he can crush you with his wrath. Raibhya is a learned ascetic and a great rishi prone to anger.’

‘“Yavakrita replied, ‘O father! I will do as you say. Have no anxiety on my account. You are my father and I will honour Raibhya as I honour you.’”

‘Lomasha said, “Having thus replied to his father in sweet words, Yavakrita, who had nothing to fear, took great pleasure in causing injury to other rishis.”’

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‘Lomasha said, “One day, in the month of Madhava,[644] Yavakrita, who was without any fear, roamed around and arrived at Raibhya’s hermitage. O descendant of the

Bharata lineage! He saw the beautiful hermitage, adorned with trees in blossom. He saw his[645] daughter-in-law, roaming around like a kinnara lady. Having lost his senses because of desire, Yavakrita shamelessly told the bashful one, 'Come to me.' Knowing his conduct and fearing his curse, as well as the energetic Raibhya, she went to him and said, 'Let it be that way.' O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Taking her to a lonely spot, he injected her with seed. Raibhya, the destroyer of enemies, then returned to his own hermitage and saw his daughter-in law, Paravasu's wife, distressed and weeping. O Yudhishthira! He comforted her with sweet words and asked her the reason. The fortunate one then told him everything that Yavakrita had said and also what she had replied, after carefully thinking it over.

'"Having heard of Yavakrita's misconduct, Raibhya was consumed by great anger and it seemed as if his heart would burn. The ascetic's anger was great. He plucked a lock from his matted hair, and observing the rites, offered it into the fire. A woman arose, exactly like the other one[646] in beauty. He again plucked out another lock and offered it into the fire. A rakshasa with terrible eyes, fearful in form, arose. The two of them then asked Raibhya, 'What should we do?' In anger, the rishi replied, 'Kill Yavakrita.' They promised that they would act as they had been asked to and went to kill Yavakrita. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The *kritya*[647] whom the great-souled one had created went to Yavakrita, and having deluded him, robbed him of his water-pot.[648] Without his water-pot, Yavakrita became unclean. The rakshasa then rushed at him, with an upraised spear. On seeing him approach with an upraised spear and with intent to kill, Yavakrita swiftly arose and dashed towards a pond. On finding that the pond was bereft of water, Yavakrita swiftly went to all the rivers. But they had also dried up.

'"Pursued by the terrible rakshasa with the upraised spear and in fear, he suddenly went to his father's agnihotra. But his entry was forcibly barred by a shudra guard who was blind. O king! The doorkeeper restrained him by force. While the shudra restrained Yavakrita, the rakshasa pursued him with the spear. His heart pierced, he fell down. Having killed Yavakrita, the rakshasa returned to Raibhya. With Raibhya's permission, he began to roam around with the one who was not an *arya*."'[649]

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'Lomasha said, "O Kounteya! Having completed the studies and rituals and having collected firewood, Bharadvaja entered his hermitage. On seeing him, all the fires used to stand up to greet him. But because his son had been killed, they did not stand up then. On witnessing this distortion in the agnihotra, the great ascetic spoke to the blind shudra house-guard who was seated there. 'O shudra! Why are the fires not delighted on

seeing me? Nor are you, as you used to earlier.[650] Is everything well in the hermitage? Is there any chance that my dim-witted son has gone to Raibhya? Tell me all this quickly. My mind is not at peace.' The shudra replied, 'Indeed, your dim-witted son did go to Raibhya. He is now lying dead, killed by a powerful rakshasa. He was pursued by the rakshasa with an upraised spear. But as a doorkeeper, I restrained him at the door of the place where the fire is kept. He desired water, but was certainly in an unclean state.[651] He was then swiftly killed by the rakshasa with the upraised spear.'

'"On hearing these unpleasant words of the shudra, Bharadvaja grasped his dead son and lamented in great misery. 'You performed austerities for the welfare of brahmanas, so that the Vedas not studied by brahmanas might become manifest in you. Your conduct towards the great-souled brahmanas was always driven by welfare. You exhibited no sin towards all beings. Nevertheless, you became harsh. O son! I prohibited you from seeing the place where Raibhya lives, because it is like Yama, the bringer of death. But you went to that mean place. The immensely energetic one knows me to be old and that you were my only son. But that supremely ill-minded one fell prey to anger. Because of Raibhya's deed, I am now mourning for my son. O son! Because of your loss and your death, I will give up my life, the most precious thing on earth. Just as I am giving up my body out of sorrow for my son, Raibhya's eldest son will soon kill him, though he will be innocent. Happy are men to whom sons have not been born. They roam happily, without having to grieve over a son. Who can be more evil than those who, grieving over the death of their sons and miserable and disturbed in senses, curse their dearest friends? Having seen my son dead, I have cursed my best friend. Where is there a second one who confronts such calamity?' Having thus lamented in many ways, Bharadvaja cremated his son. Later, he himself entered a fire that had been kindled well."'

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'Lomasha said, "At this time, the powerful and immensely fortunate King Brihaddyumna, for whom Raibhya was the sacrificial priest, performed a sacrifice. The intelligent Brihaddyumna appointed Raibhya's two sons, Arvavasu and Paravasu, as assistants at the sacrifice. O Kounteya! Having obtained their father's permission, they went there. Raibhya remained in the hermitage with Paravasu's wife. One day, Paravasu returned home to see her. He saw his father in the forest, attired in black antelope skin. It was late in the night and he was blind from sleep. He saw his father roaming in the dense forest and took him to be an animal. Thinking that his father was an animal, he killed him. He did not do this out of a desire for violence, but because he wanted to protect his own body. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! He performed all the funeral rites.

'"Then he returned to the place where the sacrifice was being held and told his brother, 'You will never be able to accomplish this deed alone. I have killed our father, mistaking him to be an animal. Therefore, you observe the righteous rite that must be observed for killing a brahmana. O sage! I am capable of accomplishing the deed alone.' Arvavasu replied, 'Then you complete the intelligent Brihaddyumna's sacrifice. For your sake, I will control my senses and act so as to expunge the sin of killing a brahmana.' O Yudhishthira! Having completed the vow required for killing a brahmana, the sage Arvavasu again returned to the sacrifice.

'"On seeing that his brother had returned, Paravasu spoke these words to Brihaddyumna, who was with his advisers. 'See that this killer of a brahmana is not permitted to enter the sacrifice. There is no doubt that the mere glance of a killer of a brahmana will cause you injury.' O king! Arvavasu was then thrown out by the servants, though he cried out repeatedly, 'I am not the killer of a brahmana.' O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The servants kept calling him the killer of a brahmana. He did not admit that he had observed the vow of killing a brahmana for his own sake. 'My brother performed the deed and I have freed him.' O king! The gods were delighted at Arvavasu's deeds. They instated him as the priest and Paravasu was dismissed. With Agni at the forefront, the gods granted him boons. He asked for the boon that his father might stand up alive, that his brother might be freed from the sin of killing their father and that both Bharadvaja and Yavakrita might rise up again. O Yudhishthira! All of them manifested themselves again.

'"Yavakrita then told the gods, with Agni at the forefront, 'I have observed and accomplished the vow of knowing the brahman. O supreme among the immortals! Using that particular rite, how was it that Raibhya was capable of slaying a learned ascetic like me?' The gods replied, 'O Yavakrita! O sage! Do not think it is the way you have spoken. Earlier, you have learned the Vedas in an easy way, without resorting to a preceptor. But he studied it with a great deal of difficulty, after satisfying his preceptors with his own deeds. He learnt about the supreme brahman over a long period of time and after tolerating suffering.' Thus did the gods speak to Yavakrita, with Agni at the forefront. Having revived all of them, the gods returned to heaven. O tiger among kings! This is the supreme hermitage, with trees that are always full of flowers and fruit. Spend the night here and you will be cleansed of all sins."'

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'Lomasha said, "O descendant of the Bharata lineage! O Kounteya! O king! You have now left behind the mountains Ushirabija, Mainaka and Shveta and also the mountain Kala. O bull among the Bharata lineage! The Ganga is resplendent here in seven streams. This region is beautiful and sacred. Agni always burns here. But this cannot be now seen by a mere man. But if you are collected and concentrate your minds, you will

be able to see these tirthas. We will now ascend Mount Shveta and Mount Mandara. The yaksha Manichara, and Kubera, the king of the yakshas, dwell there. O king! O best of men! Eighty-eight thousand gandharvas who are swift in travelling and four times that number of kimpurushas and yakshas, in many different forms and wielding many different weapons, wait upon Manibhadra, the Indra of the yakshas. Their prosperity is immense. Their speed is equal to that of the wind. They are certainly capable of dislodging the king of the gods from his seat. O son! This region is secret and is protected by powerful *yatudhanas*.[652] O Partha! These mountains are difficult of access. Therefore, use supreme concentration. Kubera has other terrible advisers and rakshasas as friends. O Kounteya! We will meet them. Therefore, concentrate your valour. O king! Mount Kailasa extends for six hundred yojanas. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The gods assemble there, in that extensive region. O Kounteya! There are innumerable yakshas, rakshasas and kinnaras, serpents, divine birds[653] and gandharvas, in the direction of Kubera's abode. O Partha! O king! Protected by me and through Bhimasena's strength, and with your own austerities and control, mix with them now. May King Varuna and Yama, victorious in battle, and Ganga and Yamuna, and the mountains give you safety. 'O goddess Ganga![654] I hear your sounds from the top of Indra's golden mountain. O fortunate one! Protect him from these mountains, this Indra among men who is honoured by all those of the Ajamidha lineage.[655] O daughter of the mountains! This king is about to enter these mountains. Therefore, grant him your protection.'"

'Yudhishthira said, "Lomasha's confusion is unprecedented.[656] All of you guard Krishna and do not be careless. His view is that this region is difficult of access. Therefore, let us observe complete cleanliness."'

Vaishampayana said, 'He then told the greatly valorous Bhima, "O Bhimasena! Protect Krishna carefully. O son![657] Whether Arjuna is far or whether he is near, it is you Krishna resorts to in times of fear." Then the great-souled one went to the twins and inhaled the fragrance of their hands and embraced their bodies. In a voice choking with tears, the king said, "Do not be afraid. Tread carefully."'

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'Yudhishthira said, "There are hidden beings here, powerful rakshasas. O Vrikodara! We are capable of passing them with fire and austerities. O Kounteya! Resorting to strength, control your hunger and thirst. O extender of the Kuru lineage! Resort to your strength and dexterity. You have heard the words of the rishi about Mount Kailasa. O Kounteya! Use your intelligence to think about how Krishna will pass this place. O lord! Alternatively, return from here with Sahadeva, Dhoumya, the cooks, the superintendents

of the kitchen, all the servants, the chariots, the horses and other brahmanas who cannot bear the difficulties of the road, with all of them. O Bhima! O one with the large eyes! The three of us will go on, restrained in our food and rigid in our vows—the immensely ascetic Lomasha, I and Nakula. Wait carefully for my return at Gangadvara. Dwell there and protect Droupadi until I return."

'Bhima replied, "O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The princess is oppressed by exhaustion and miserable. But in a desire to see Shvetavahana,[658] there is no doubt that she will travel. Your suffering is also acute at not being able to see him. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! It will be even more without Sahadeva, I and Krishna. If you so wish, let all the chariots return with the servants, the cooks, the superintendents of the kitchen and whoever else you think of. I do not wish to leave you here, in these mountains infested by rakshasas, in this uneven and difficult region. This immensely fortunate princess is devoted to her vows. O tiger among men! She will not be able to return without you. Like that, Sahadeva is always devoted to you. I know his mind and he will never return. O great king! In addition, all of us wish to see Savyasachi. All of us are desirous and therefore, all of us will travel together. If we cannot use our chariots to travel over these mountains with many caverns, we will travel on foot. O king! Do not worry. I will carry Panchali wherever she is incapable of travelling on her own. This is what I have decided in accordance with my intelligence. O king! Do not worry. I will also carry these two delicate warriors who are the delight of Madri.[659] I will bear them over difficult terrain, if they are incapable of doing it themselves."

'Yudhishthira said, "O Bhima! Since you have spoken like this, let your strength increase, so that you are capable of carrying Droupadi on this long journey, and also the twins. O fortunate one! No one else can do it. May your strength, fame, devotion to dharma and deeds increase. O mighty-armed one! If you are able to carry your brothers and Krishna, may you not suffer from exhaustion. May defeat never confront you."'

Vaishampayana said, 'Then the beautiful Krishna laughed and spoke these words. "O descendant of the Bharata lineage![660] I will travel. Do not be anxious on my account."

'Lomasha said, "It is possible to traverse Mount Gandhamadana with austerities. O Kounteya! O king! Therefore, let all of us be united with austerities—Nakula, Sahadeva, Bhimasena, I and you—so that we are able to see Shvetavahana."'

Vaishampayana said, 'O king! Having happily conversed in this fashion, they happily saw the extensive region of Subahu, prosperous with many elephants and horses, infested with kiratas, *tanganas* and full of hundreds of *kunindas*.[661] This Himalayan region is frequented by the gods and has many extraordinary things. On seeing them, Subahu, lord of the kunindas, was extremely delighted. He met them at the frontiers and welcomed them with homage. Having been thus worshipped, all of them happily dwelt there for some time. When the sun was clear,[662] they left for the Himalaya mountains.

O king! The servants, Indrasena being the foremost, the superintendents of the kitchen, the cooks and all of Droupadi's retinue were entrusted by the maharathas to the king who was the lord of the kunindas. The Pandavas, the immensely valorous descendants of the Kourava lineage, then slowly left that region on foot, together with Krishna. They were extremely happy at the prospect of seeing Dhananjaya.'

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'Yudhishthira said, "O Bhimasena! O twins! O Panchali! Listen. There exists nothing in beings that is destroyed. Look at us roaming in the forest. We may tell each other that we are weak and oppressed, but though incapable, must travel in a desire to see Dhananjaya. It[663] burns my body, like fire on a pile of cotton. I do not see the brave Dhananjaya by my side. In a desire to see him, I live with my younger brothers in the forest. Because of the extreme oppression meted out to Yajnaseni, that brave one must also be burning.[664] I do not see the infinitely energetic Partha, Nakula's elder, the terrible wielder of the invincible bow. O Vrikodara! I am tormented on that account. With a desire to see him, I have visited beautiful tirthas, forests and lakes, together with you. I have not seen the brave Dhananjaya, devoted to the truth, for five years. O Vrikodara! Since I do not see Bibhatsu, it is consuming me. O Vrikodara! Since I do not see the dark and mighty-armed Gudakesha,[665] whose brave gait is like that of a lion, I am tormented. O Vrikodara! I do not see that best of men, accomplished in the use of weapons, skilful in battle and the equal of any archer. It is for this reason that I am tormented. Among the masses of enemies, he strides like angry Yama, the destroyer. Dhananjaya has the shoulders of a lion and is like a maddened elephant. He is not inferior to Shakra in strength and valour. Partha, the one with the white horses, is infinitely brave and is elder to the twins. On not being able to see Phalguna, I am immersed in immense grief. Even when he was insulted by an inferior man, he was always forgiving in his conduct. He gave shelter and protection to those who walked the straight path. But to those who were crooked and to those who sought to kill him through deceitful means, even if it happened to be the wielder of the vajra himself,[666] he was like virulent poison. The greatly strong Bibhatsu is infinite in his soul. The powerful one always granted protection to an enemy who sought refuge with him. He was always our refuge. He destroyed his enemies in battle. He robbed all their jewels and he brought all of us happiness. In earlier times, it was through his valour that I obtained many celestial jewels of different types, those that Suyodhana now possesses. O brave one! In earlier times, through the strength of his arms, I once possessed an assembly hall. O Pandava! It was full of all kinds of gems and was famous in the three worlds. He is like Vasudeva in his valour. He is Kartavirya's equal in war. He is invincible and unconquered in battle. I do not see Phalguna. The one who slew enemies

with his valour was born after the immensely valorous Sankarshana,[667] after Bhima who is unvanquished in battle and after Vasudeva. The strength of his arms is equal to the power of Purandara. He is equal to the wind in his speed, to the moon in the beauty of his face and to eternal death in his anger.

'"O might-armed one! O brave one! Desiring to see that tiger among men, all of us will now enter Mount Gandhamadana. The exetensive Badari is there and the hermitage of Nara and Narayana. It is always inhabited by yakshas. We will see that supreme mountain. We will see Kubera's beautiful lotus pond, protected by rakshasas. Observing great austerities, we will traverse on foot. O Vrikodara! One who has failed in austerities cannot reach that region. Nor can one who is cruel or avaricious, or one who has not calmed himself. O Bhima! In order to follow Arjuna's footsteps, all of us will go there. We will be armed and strap our swords. We will be accompanied by brahmanas who observe great vows. Those who are not controlled encounter flies, gnats, mosquitoes, tigers, lions and reptiles. O Partha! But those who are controlled do not see them. Therefore, let us control our souls. Let us be restrained in our food. We will enter Mount Gandhamadana to see Dhananjaya."'

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Vaishampayana said, 'All of those infinitely energetic warriors were excellent archers. They had tautened bows and quivers full of arrows. They had armour for their arms and their fingers. They had swords. They grasped them and took the best of the brahmanas with them. O king! Together with Panchali, they proceeded towards Gandhamadana. They saw lakes, rivers, mountains and forests on the top of the mountain and trees that provided a lot of shade. There were regions that always had flowers and fruit, frequented by masses of devarshis. The brave ones controlled their souls and lived on roots and fruit. They travelled through high lands and low, regions that were uneven and full of dangers. They saw many different kinds of animals. The brave and great-souled ones then entered Mount Gandhamadana, frequented by rishis, siddhas and immortals, loved by gandharvas and apsaras and a mountain peopled by kinnaras.

'O lord of the earth! As the brave ones entered Mount Gandhamadana, a violent storm arose, with a large quantity of rain. A gigantic cloud of dust arose, raising a mass of dry leaves. This suddenly covered the earth, the sky and heaven. Nothing could be seen when the sky was covered with dust. They were not even capable of communicating to one another what they thought in their minds. Their eyes were enveloped in the darkness and they could not see. They could not even see each other. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! They were battered by the storm of rocks and dust. The trees were torn asunder by the wind and were forcibly flung down on the ground. A great sound arose from other trees. "Is the sky falling down on the ground? Are the mountains

splitting asunder?" Deluded by the wind, this is what all of them thought in their minds. They were battered by the wind and were frightened. They felt their way with their hands, groping for trees, anthills and uneven terrain along the road and lay down. Grasping his bow and grasping Krishna, the immensely strong Bhimasena sought shelter under a tree. Dharmaraja and Dhoumya lay down in that great forest. Sahadeva, who had the agnihotra with him, lay down under a mountain.[668] Nakula, the other brahmanas and the greatly asectic Lomasha were alarmed, and seeking refuge in the trees, lay down.

'Then the wind died down. The storm of dust was calmed. A great downpour started from the heavy clouds. Aided by the swift wind, there was torrential rain and hail, incessantly. This flooded the ground on all sides. O lord of the earth! On every side, rivers that were headed towards the ocean were covered with foam and dirt and overflowed. Bearing large quantities of water and overflowing with foam, they rushed with a thunderous roar, uprooting gigantic trees. When the rain subsided, the wind died down, the water flowed down to the lower regions and the sun appeared, all of them slowly emerged and assembled. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Once again, the brave ones proceeded towards Mount Gandhamadana.'

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Vaishampayana said, 'When the great-souled Pandavas had travelled a short distance, Droupadi, who was not accustomed to travelling on foot, sat down. She was exhausted and miserable from the storm and the wind. The famous Panchali was delicate and fainted. When the black-eyed one fell down with faintness, she clasped her thighs with her round and beautiful arms. Trying to support herself with her thighs, which were like the trunks of an elephant, she suddenly fell down on the ground, like a trembling plantain tree. On seeing the one with the beautiful hips fall like a clinging creeper, the valorous Nakula dashed forward and grasped her. Nakula said, "O king! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The dark-eyed daughter of the king of Panchala is exhausted and has fallen down on the ground. Be considerate. She does not deserve unhappiness. But the one whose gait is slow has suffered great unhappiness. O great king! Comfort her. She is tired out through exhaustion." On hearing these words, the king was extremely distressed. Bhima and Sahadeva also swiftly rushed towards her.

'Kounteya[669] looked at her. She was wan in face and emaciated. Taking her on his lap, the one with dharma in his soul began to lament. "She was accustomed to sleeping on beautifully spread beds, in houses that were guarded well. This beautiful one is deserving of happiness. How is it that she has fallen down on the ground? Her feet are delicate. She is deserving of boons. Her face is like a lotus, but because of me, it is now darkened. Having been addicted to dice, what have I done out of my stupidity? With

Krishna, I am now wandering around in this forest, infested by masses of animals. Her father, King Drupada, bestowed the large-eyed one, thinking that with the Pandavas as her husbands, Panchali would obtain happiness. None of that has happened. She is oppressed by exhaustion and unhappiness. She has fallen down on the ground because of my evil deeds." When Dharmaraja Yudhishthira lamented in this fashion, Dhoumya and all the other supreme among brahmanas came to him. They comforted him and pronounced their benedictions over him. They recited mantras to keep the rakshasas away and performed rites. The supreme rishis recited mantras for the sake of peace. The Pandavas repeatedly touched her with their cold hands. Fanned by the cool breeze that had drops of water mixed in it, Panchali slowly recovered and regained consciousness. They laid out the distressed Krishna on antelope skins that were spread out. After having rested, the ascetic lady regained her senses. With calloused hands,[670] the twins slowly rubbed her red-soled feet, marked auspiciously. Dharmaraja Yudhishthira also comforted her.

'The best of Kurus then spoke to Bhimasena. "O Bhima! There will be many mountains. They will be uneven, covered with ice and difficult of access. O mighty-armed one! How will Krishna be able to traverse them?" Bhimasena replied, "O king! I will myself carry the princess, the twins and you, bull among men. O Indra among kings! Do not unnecessarily be anxious. Alternatively, my son is great in valour. He can roam the skies and is my equal in strength. If you say so, Ghatotkacha will carry all of us." Having been instructed by Dharmaraja, he remembered his rakshasa son. As soon as his father had thought of him, Ghatotkacha, with dharma in his soul, appeared. The mighty-armed one greeted the brahmanas and the Pandavas, hands joined in salutation, and they also welcomed him. Truth was his valour and he spoke to his father Bhimasena. "You thought of me and I swifly arrived to serve you. O mighty-armed one! What is your command? Without a doubt, I will do everything." On hearing this, Bhimasena embraced the rakshasa.'

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'Yudhishthira said, "O Bhima! This bull among rakshasas is learned in dharma. He is always brave and strong. This son born from you is devoted to us. Let him immediately carry his mother.[671] O Bhima! With the strength of your arms and your terrifying valour, I will remain unhurt and will journey to Gandhamadana with Panchali."'

Vaishampayana said, 'On hearing his brother's words, Bhimasena, tiger among men, commanded his son Ghatotkacha, the destroyer of enemies. "O Hidimba's son! Your unvanquished mother is exhausted. O son! You are capable of going anywhere at will. You are strong. Take her up into the sky. O fortunate one! Carry her on your shoulders. Follow us in the sky. But travel low, so that she does not feel oppressed." Ghatotkacha

replied, "I am alone capable of carrying Dharmaraja, Dhoumya, the princess and the twins. It shouldn't be surprising that I can do it now, when I have help."[672] Having said this, Ghatotkacha carried Krishna in the midst of the brave Pandavas. Others[673] carried the Pandavas. Lomasha, whose splendour was unrivalled, travelled along the path followed by the siddhas through his own powers, like a second sun. Commanded by the Indra among the rakshasas, other immensely powerful rakshasas took up all the brahmanas and travelled. They glanced at the extremely beautiful forests and groves and travelled towards the extensive Badari. Carried by those swift rakshasas whose strength was immense, the brave ones quickly covered a long distance in a short span of time.

'They saw many regions infested by *mlecchas*,[674] full of many stores of jewels. They saw mountains and foothills, the stores of many minerals. They were populated by vidyadharas and had large numbers of monkeys and kinnaras, in addition to kimpurushas and gandharvas. There were networks of rivers, frequented by many different kinds of birds. They were visited by many different kinds of animals. They were adorned by monkeys. Having passed over many regions and over northern Kuru, they saw the supreme and extraordinary Mount Kailasa. Near it, they saw the hermitage of Nara and Narayana. It was full of celestial trees that always bore flowers and fruit. They saw the beautiful Badari, with a circular trunk.[675] It was always tender and offered unfettered shade. It was supremely beautiful. It had tender leaves and was smooth and radiant. Its branches were large. They were expansive and were limitless in lustre. It was full of fruit that was tasty and divine. They dripped honey and were always celestial, beloved of the masses of maharshis. It was always populated by masses of different kinds of birds that frolicked madly. It grew in a region where there were no mosquitoes or gnats. There were many roots and fruits and a lot of water there. It was covered with blue grass and frequented by the gods and the gandharvas. It stood on a flat stretch of ground that was naturally beautiful. It was gentle from the touch of snow and was a beautiful region bereft of thorns.

'Having reached the spot with the bulls among the brahmanas, all the great-souled ones descended slowly from the shoulders of the rakshasas. O king! Together with the bulls among the brahmanas, the Pandavas saw the beautiful hermitage, the refuge of Nara and Narayana. The sacred place was devoid of darkness, though it was untouched by the sun's rays. It was free from afflictions like hunger, thirst, coldness and heat. It was the destroyer of all sorrow. It was crowded by masses of maharshis and complete with the attainment of the brahman. O great king! It was difficult of access to men who were outside the pale of dharma. It was celestial with the homage of offerings and oblations. It was maintained well and fragrant. There were offerings of celestial flowers and it was radiant everywhere. There were large stores for fire. It had lovely ladles. It

was adorned with large and firm pots full of water. It was a place of refuge for all beings and resounded with the sound of the brahman. That hermitage destroyed all exhaustion and was a celestial hermitage. It was full of beauty and produced immeasurable merit. It was frequented by those who worshipped the gods. They lived on roots and fruit. They were in control of their senses and were attired in bark and black antelope skins. They were like the sun and the fire in their austerities and were controlled in their souls. Those maharshis had restrained their senses and were in search of salvation. Those immensely fortunate ones were learned in the brahman and were immersed in the brahman.

'The intelligent Yudhishthira, Dharma's son, approached those immensely energetic rishis with his brothers, with restraint and purity. All the maharshis had divine sight. When they saw Yudhishthira, they welcomed him with great delight. Those who were always devoted to studies, pronounced their blessings over him. They were the equal of the fire and they happily welcomed him in accordance with the prescribed rites. They offered him pure water, flowers, roots and fruit. Yudhishthira, Dharma's son, was restrained and happily accepted the offerings of the maharshis. That beautiful place was divinely scented and was like Shakra's abode. O unblemished one! Together with Krishna and his brothers, and the brahmanas who were learned in the Vedas and the Vedangas, the Pandava happily entered the pure place that was like heaven itself. The one with dharma in his soul saw Nara and Narayana's spot, worshipped by the gods and the devarshis. It was rendered beautiful by the Bhagirathi. The divine fruit dripped with honey and it was frequented by masses of brahmarshis. The great-souled ones approached and dwelt there with the brahmanas. They saw Mount Mainaka with its golden peak, frequented by masses of brahmanas, the auspicious Bindusara and the sacred and great tirtha of Bhagirathi, with its cool and clear water, with gems, corals and stones and adorned with beautiful trees. There were divine blossoms that heightened the pleasure of the mind. The great-souled Pandavas saw and roamed around there. They repeatedly made offerings to the gods and the ancestors. The brave bulls among men dwelt there with the brahmanas. The Pandavas, tigers among men, who were the equals of the immortals, took great pleasure in watching Krishna sport there in various ways.'

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Vaishampayana said, 'Those brave tigers among men observed great purity and lived there for six nights, hoping to see Dhananjaya. The Pandavas sported with delight in that beautiful grove that was pleasing to all beings. It had trees ladened with blossoms and were bent down, burdened with fruit. It was beautiful everywhere, astir with flocks of male cuckoos. The foliage was tender and uninterrupted. It was cool with shade and charming. There were beautiful ponds with clear water. There were lotuses and lilies

there, making every side dazzling.[676] The Pandavas were delighted at witnessing these beautiful sights there. A fragrant breeze wafted there, pleasant to the touch. This gladdened the hearts of all the Pandavas, Krishna and the bulls among the brahmanas.

'Then, in accordance with its own wishes, a breeze blew from the north-east. It carried with it a divine lotus with one thousand petals. Panchali saw that beautiful and pure lotus descend on the ground, redolent with divine fragrance and carried by the wind. O king! The fortunate one approached that pure and supremely fragrant flower and extremely happily, told Bhimasena, "O Bhima! Look at this divine, dazzling and supreme blossom. It is full of fragrance and has delighted my heart. O destroyer of enemies! I will give this to Dharmaraja. But to satisfy my desire, get me others, so that I can take them back to the hermitage in Kamyaka. O Partha! If I am your beloved, get them for me in large numbers. I wish to take them back to the hermitage in Kamyaka." Having addressed these words to Bhimasena, the unblemished Panchali then took the flower to Dharmaraja.

'Learning about the queen's wishes, the immensely strong Bhima, bull among men, departed, to do that which would bring pleasure to his beloved. He swiftly left in the direction from which the breeze had carried the flower, so that he might obtain more flowers. He grasped his bow that was inlaid with gold and arrows that were like the virulent venom of snakes. He was like an angry king of the animals, or like an elephant in rut. The one with the strength of his arms wished to do that which would bring pleasure to Droupadi. The strong one was without fear or delusion and climbed up the mountain.

'It was covered with trees, creepers and lantanas and strewn with blue stones. The destroyer of enemies went up the sacred mountain, frequented by kinnaras. There were many kinds of minerals, trees and birds of different types. Adorned with all kinds of ornaments, it seemed to be like an arm of the earth, stretching upwards. Gandhamadana's peak was beautiful everywhere. His eyes and his desires were on it and he thought about it in his heart. The infinitely valorous one's ears, mind and eyes were fixed on the peaks that resounded to the sounds of male cuckoos and the humming of bees. The greatly energetic one inhaled the fragrance of the blossom everywhere and proceeded to climb up Gandhamadana, like a mad elephant in the forest. His father, the cool breeze that blows from Gandhamadana, took away his exhaustion and fanned by this, his body hair stood up.[677] To obtain the flowers, the destroyer of enemies traversed a region frequented by yakshas, gandharvas, gods and masses of brahmarshis. The clean sides of the mountain were streaked with minerals—golden, black and silver. The patterns were uneven, as if the mountain had been painted with fingers. With clouds clinging to the sides, the mountain seemed to be dancing, as if on wings. Because of the gushing of water from streams, it seemed to wear a string of pearls. It had lovely groves, waterfalls and caverns. Peacocks danced there, in tune with the anklets of

apsaras. The elephants that guard the cardinal directions[678] had rubbed the rocky surface with their tusks. When the water was swiftly released from the streams and descended, it seemed as if the mountain was loosening its garments. The deer approached and curiously looked at him, unused to fear, with grass in their mouths. Vayu's son, the handsome Kounteya, proceeded happily, as if in sport, tearing away many nets of creepers with the force of his thighs. The one with the beautiful eyes wished to do that which would bring pleasure to his beloved. The youth was as tall as a golden palm and his body was like that of a lion. He was as strong as a mad elephant and he possessed the speed of a mad elephant. His copper-hued eyes were like that of a mad elephant and he was capable of withstanding a mad elephant. Seated by the sides of their beloveds, and invisible to the sight, the wives of yakshas and gandharvas, watched him and made expressive gestures.

'As if having adopted a new body, Pandava happily ascended Gandhamadana's beautiful peak. He remembered the many woes that had been inflicted by Duryodhana. Eager to perform the task that the forest-dwelling Droupadi had given, he thought, "Arjuna has gone to heaven. I have come away to fetch the flowers. What will the arya Yudhishthira do? Out of affection and out of distrust for what is in the forest, Yudhishthira, the best of men, will not release Nakula and Sahadeva.[679] How can I obtain the flowers quickly?" Thinking in this way, the tiger among men travelled with the speed of the king of the birds.[680] The earth shook when his feet struck it, like a storm at the end of an era. The immensely strong Vrikodara's speed frightened herds of elephants, lions, tigers and animals. The strong one forcefully uprooted many gigantic trees and brushed them aside with his chest. Pandu's son swiftly tore aside creepers and lantanas, as he climbed higher and higher up the peak of the mountain, like an elephant. He roared like a monsoon cloud, streaked with lightning. O lord! Awakened by that terrible sound and the twang of his bow, herds of animals were frightened and fled in all directions.

'On the slopes of the peak of Gandhamadana, the mighty-armed one then saw a beautiful grove of plantain trees that extended for many yojanas. The immensely strong one swiftly dashed towards it. Like a giant elephant oozing musth, like the wind among many trees, Bhima, supreme among those who are strong, uprooted the trunks of many plantain trees that were as large as many palm trees and thrust them aside. There were many large animals, herds of *ruru*,[681] monkeys, lions, buffaloes and aquatic animals. The lions and tigers were angered and attacked Bhimasena. They were extremely fearsome. Their jaws gaped and their roars were terrible. But Vayu's son, Bhima, used the strength of his arms and angrily killed elephants with elephants and lions with lions. The lord, the strong Pandava, used the palm of his hand to kill others. Thus killed by Bhima, lions, tigers and hyenas crept away fearfully, discharging urine and dung.

Pandu's handsome and immensely strong son then swiftly entered the forest and filled all the directions with his roar. Hearing that terrible roar let out by Bhimasena, all the animals and birds in the forest were frightened and fled elsewhere. On hearing the sounds of the animals and the birds, thousands of birds flew up. Their wings were wet with water. On seeing those masses of aquatic birds, the bull among the Bharata lineage followed them and saw a beautiful and giant lake. Though it was fanned by clumps of golden plantain trees along its shores, stirred by the breeze, it was tranquil. The lake was adorned with many lotuses and lilies. Descending into the water, the strongest among strong ones sported around, like a gigantic elephant. Having sported there for a long time, the infinitely energetic one climbed out and swiftly entered the forest that was full of many trees. With the force of his breath, the Pandava blew on his conch shell. The sound of the conch shell, Bhimasena's roars and the terrible sound of the slapping of his arms resounded in the mountainous caverns. Hearing the loud sound of the slapping, like the roar of thunder, lions that were asleep in the mountainous caverns let out loud roars. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The roar of the lions frightened the elephants. The great mountain was filled with their loud trumpeting.

'Hanuman, bull among monkeys, was asleep. On hearing these roars, the monkey, gigantic in form, began to yawn. He was as gigantic as Indra's flagpole and he had been asleep in that clump of plantain trees. As he yawned, he lashed the ground with his tail and the sound was like that of Indra's vajra. Like a bellowing cow, on every side, the mountain echoed from the sound of the tail, through the mouths of the giant caverns. Rising above the sound created by the mad elephants, the sound of the lashing of the tail spread throughout the colourful peak of the mountain. On hearing the noise, Bhimasena's body hair stood up. In an attempt to identify the source, he roamed around the grove of plantain trees. Then the mighty-armed one found the lord of the monkeys in the middle of the plantain grove, lying down on an elevated and flat slab of stone. He was difficult to look at, like a flash of lightning. He was yellow, like lightning. He looked like a flash of lightning. He was as swift as lightning. His short and stout head rested on the crook of his arms. Because his shoulders were so large, the waist above his hips seemed to be slender. His tail was bent at the end and was covered with long hair. It was erect and dazzling, like a banner. His lips were red and his tongue had the complexion of copper. His ears were red and his brows moved. His face was like the moon with its beams and the teeth were round and sharp. The inside of the mouth was adorned with white and dazzling teeth. Above it, the extensive mane looked like a mass of ashoka flowers. The immensely radiant one was lying down in the midst of the golden plantain trees. His form was as resplendent as a blazing fire and he looked fearlessly with eyes that were as yellow as honey.

'Bhima, terrible in prowess, swiftly approached that gigantic and supremely powerful one, supreme among monkeys. He roared like a lion, so that the monkey might be

forewarned. At Bhima's roar, the animals and the birds were frightened. The immensely powerful Hanuman only opened his eyes a little. He looked at him contemptuously, through eyes that were yellow like honey. Smiling, the monkey addressed the human Kounteya. "I was ill and was happily asleep. Why did you wake me up? Do you not know that it is your duty to show compassion towards all beings? Since we have been born from inferior wombs, we do not know what dharma is. But men have intelligence and should show compassion towards animals. Why do you commit cruel deeds that cause injury to the body, speech and heart? They are against dharma. You are blessed with intelligence. You do not know what dharma is. You have not served old ones. You have limited intelligence and in your childlishness, are injuring animals. Who are you? Tell me. Despite being a man, why have you come to this forest that is shunned by men? From here onwards, the mountain is insurmountable and inaccessible, except by the siddhas. O brave one! You cannot go there. O immensely powerful one! I am restraining you out of compassion and friendliness. O lord! You cannot go beyond this place. If you accept my words, relax and eat these roots and fruit that taste like amrita. Then return."'

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Vaishampayana said, 'On hearing these words of the intelligent Indra among monkeys, Bhimasena, the destroyer of enemies, said, "Who are you? Why have you assumed the form of an ape? It is a kshatriya, right after the brahmana varna, who is asking you. I am a Kourava and have been born in the lunar dynasty. Kunti bore me in her womb. I am a Pandava and am Vayu's son. I am known by the name of Bhimasena." On hearing these words of Bhimasena, Hanuman, Vayu's son, smiled and told Vayu's son.[682] "I am a monkey. I will yield you the path, as you wish. Do not continue on this path. Else, you will meet with destruction." Bhima replied, "O monkey! I am not asking you about destruction, or about anything else. Arise and grant me right of way. Otherwise, you will confront destruction from me." Hanuman said, "I am ill and therefore, do not have the strength to get up. If you are determined to go, then jump over me." Bhima replied, "The *paramatman* without qualities[683] pervades your body and can be known only through knowledge. I cannot insult Him[684] by jumping over you. Through my studies, I know Him and all beings result from Him. Had that not been the case, I would have jumped over you and this mountain, just as Hanuman leapt over the ocean." Hanuman asked, "Who is the one named Hanuman who leapt over the ocean? O best of the Kuru lineage! I am asking you. Tell me if you can." Bhima answered, "He is my brother and is renowned because of his qualities. He has intelligence, power and strength. That handsome bull among the monkeys is extremely famous in the Ramayana. For the sake of Rama's consort, this Indra among the apes leapt over the ocean that was one hundred

yojanas wide in a single leap. That greatly valorous one is my brother. I am his equal in energy, strength and prowess and can chastise you in battle. Arise and grant me right of way. Otherwise, witness my manliness today. Do what I am asking you to, and do not go to Yama's abode." Knowing him to be strong and insolent because of the strength of his arms, Hanuman laughed at him in his heart.

'He spoke these words. "O unblemished one! Show me your favours. Because of old age, I do not have the strength to get up. Exhibit compassion towards me. Pass by moving my tail aside." With a contemptuous smile, Bhima grasped the giant ape's tail with his left hand, but he was not able to move it. Then he tugged at the tail, raised erect like Indra's weapon,[685] with both his hands. But even with both arms, the immensely strong Bhima was unable to move it. His eyebrows contracted. His eyes were dilated. His face became wrinkled with frowns. His body began to sweat. But Bhima could not dislodge it. However much he tried, he was not able to raise the handsome tail. With a face lowered in shame, Bhima stood by the monkey's side. Kounteya bowed down and joining his hands in salutation, spoke these words. "O tiger among monkeys! Please show me your favours and pardon my harsh words. Whether you are a siddha, a god, a gandharva or guhyaka, please tell me who you are. I am asking you and wish to know. Who are you in the form of an ape?"

'Hanuman said, "O destroyer of enemies! Since you are curious to know everything about me, I will tell you everything in detail. O descendant of the Pandava lineage! Listen. I was born in Kesari's field[686] from Vayu, who gives life to the universe. O one with the lotus eyes! I am the monkey named Hanuman. All the chiefs of the monkeys waited upon the two kings of the apes, Sugriva the son of the sun, and Vali the son of Indra. I was a friend to the immensely brave Sugriva, the destroyer of enemies, like wind to the fire. For some reason, Sugriva was driven out by his brother[687] and lived with me, for a long time, in Rishyamukha. At that time, the immensely strong hero Dasharathi[688] Rama, who was Vishnu in human form, roamed on this earth. In order to please his father, that greatest of archers resorted to Dandakaranya, with his wife, with his younger brother and with his bow. Ravana abducted his wife forcibly from Janasthana, having deceived the immensely wise Raghava in the form of a deer.[689] Having lost his wife, together with his brother, Raghava searched for the path she had taken and met Sugriva, bull among monkeys, on the peak of a mountain. The great-souled Raghava became his friend. Having killed Vali, he instated Sugriva in the kingdom. He[690] sent monkeys to search for Sita. We and crores of monkeys left in one direction and a vulture gave us news about Sita.[691] To complete the task given by Rama, the performer of unblemished deeds, I swiftly jumped over the ocean that extended for one hundred yojanas. I saw the goddess in Ravana's abode and after having told her my name, returned. Then brave Rama killed all the rakshasas. He

regained his wife, who had been lost like the knowledge of the Vedas. When the brave Rama was instated,[692] I asked him that as long as the deeds of that enemy-destroying hero were recounted on earth, I should be alive that long. He agreed. Rama ruled over his kingdom for eleven thousand years and then went to heaven. O unblemished one! O son![693] Since then, apsaras and gandharvas sing of the deeds of that great hero and bring me pleasure here. O descendant of the Kuru lineage! This road is inaccessible to mortals. That is the reason I have restrained you from travelling along this road, frequented by the gods. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! I do not wish you to be oppressed or cursed. This is the celestial path of the gods and humans cannot travel along it. But the lake that you came in search of, is not far away."'

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Vaishampayana said, 'Having been thus addressed, the powerful and mighty-armed Bhimasena prostrated himself before his brother and happily spoke these gentle words to Hanuman, lord of the monkeys. "Since I have been able to see your illustrious self, no one is more fortunate than I am. Since I have been able to see you, this is a great favour to me. But I desire that you should today do that which is my wish. O brave one! I wish to see your unmatched form that you assumed when you leapt across the ocean, the abode of sharks. I will then be satisified and will have faith in your words." Having been thus addressed, the energetic ape began to laugh and said, "Neither you, nor anyone else, can see that form of mine. That was in another age that no longer exists. Time was different in krita yuga and it is different in treta and dvapara.[694] This is the time of decay and I no longer possess that form. The earth, rivers, ranges, mountains, siddhas, gods and maharshis must all conform to time and adjust their forms from one yuga to another yuga. Strength, size and power decline, and then increase again. O extender of the Kuru lineage! Therefore, do not wish to see that form. I am conforming to the rules of the yugas and no one can overcome time." Bhima said, "Then tell me the number of yugas and the conduct from one yuga to another yuga. What are the different forms of dharma, kama and artha, and variations in size, influence, existence and death?"

'Hanuman replied, "O son! Krita is the yuga when dharma is eternal. At the time of krita, supreme among yugas, there are no deeds to be done. Dharma knew no decay then. Nor were beings destroyed. That is the reason this yuga was known as krita.[695] Those qualities have gone now. O son! In krita yuga, there are no gods, demons, gandharvas, yakshas, rakshasas or serpents. There is no buying or selling. The sounds of Rig, Sama and Yajur did not exist. Nor did rites, or manual labour. When thought of, the desired fruits appeared. The only dharma was sannyasa. At the conjunction of the yugas, there is no disease, or decay of the senses. There is no discontentment, no lamentation, no insolence, no wickedness, no strife, no laziness, no enmity, no

distortion, no fear, no sorrow, no envy and no jealousy. The supreme brahman, the supreme objective of all yogis, and the white Narayana were then in the souls of all beings. Brahmanas, kshatriyas, vaishyas and shudras were all auspiciously marked in krita yuga and were equal in deportment. All beings were engaged in their own tasks. The stages of life, conduct, knowledge, wisdom and deed were equally distributed among the varnas and all of them obtained equal dharma. All of them were united with one Veda. All rituals were performed with one mantra. Though they may have followed different forms of dharma, they actually followed one Veda and one dharma. They followed the four ashramas and performed tasks without seeking the fruits, in accordance with the dictates of that time. They attained the supreme objective. Everyone sought for yoga in one's soul and being united with dharma, attained the objective. In krita yuga, the four varnas had four eternal feet.[696] This was known as krita yuga, devoid of the three qualities."[697]

'"Now hear about treta yuga. Sacrifices were introduced then. Dharma decayed by one quarter then and Achyuta[698] assumed a red complexion. Men were always addicted to the truth and devoted to the dharma of rituals. Sacrifices were introduced and many rituals became part of dharma in treta. These were motivated by reasons and rituals and donations were because of the fruits that they would bring. People never deviated from the path of dharma and were devoted to austerities and donations. In treta yuga, people performed deeds in accordance with their own dharma.

'"In dvapara yuga, dharma decayed by half. Vishnu assumes a yellow complexion and there are four Vedas. Some people know four Vedas. Others know three, or two, or one. Still others know no hymns. The sacred texts have thus been divided into many parts and there are many rituals. Beings are engaged in austerities and donations because of their passions.[699] Because the single Veda is no longer known, the Vedas have been divided into many parts. There has been a deviation from the truth and there are only a few who are established in the truth. When one deviates from the truth, one becomes a prey to many diseases. One resorts to desire and there are many natural disasters. Being afflicted by these, some men resort to terrible austerities. Others, motivated by a desire to attain heaven, resort to deeds. Thus, having attained dvapara, beings decay because they are no longer devoted to dharma.

'"O Kounteya! Only one quarter of dharma remains in kali yuga. When this yuga arrives, Keshava's complexion becomes black. The rituals of the Vedas, dharma, sacrifices and deeds fall into disuse. There is excessive rain, disease, sin and vices like anger. There are many natural calamities. There are ailments and sicknesses. As the yugas proceed, dharma repeatedly decays. As dharma decays, beings repeatedly deteriorate. As beings deteriorate, the forces that sustain the world also go into a decline. As the yugas decay, even tasks performed in the name of dharma lead to

perverse outcomes. This is the name of kali yuga, which will soon manifest itself. Even those who live for a long time must conform to the changes in the yugas. O destroyer of enemies! You were curious to know everything about me. Why should a learned man wish to know about things that are useless? O mighty-armed one! I have told you everything that you had asked me, including about the number of yugas. May you be blessed. Leave now."'

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'Bhima said, "I will never go without seeing your earlier form. If you are pleased with me, show me your own form."'

Vaishampayana said, 'At these words of Bhima, the ape smiled and showed him the form that he had adopted when he leapt over the ocean. In order to please his brother, he adopted that gigantic shape. His body grew in length and breadth. The immensely radiant monkey stood as large as a mountain, covering the plantain grove. Having attained that gigantic shape that was like a second mountain, with copper-coloured eyes, sharp teeth and eyes marked by frowns, the monkey lashed his long tail and enveloped the directions. Bhima, the descendant of the Kourava lineage, saw his brother's gigantic shape and was astounded. He was repeatedly delighted. On seeing his blazing energy, like the sun, or a golden mountain, or the sky on fire, Bhima closed his eyes.

'Hanuman then smiled and spoke to Bhimasena. "O unblemished one! You are capable of seeing my body up to this point. I can go on extending my body, as much as I desire. O Bhima! Amidst enemies, my body becomes gigantic through its own energy." On seeing Hanuman's immensely terrible body, the equal of Mounts Vindhya and Mandara, Pavana's son was bewildered.[700] Though he was delighted, his soul trembled. Bhima joined his hands in salutation and spoke to Hanuman, who was still established in that form. "O lord! O immensely valorous one! I have seen your extensive body. Now decrease it through your own powers. I am unable to look at you. You are like the rising sun. You are immeasurable. You are as inaccessible as Mount Mainaka. O brave one! It is a source of great wonder to me today that, though Rama had you at his side, he had to fight with Ravana himself. With the strength of your arms alone, you were capable of destroying Lanka with its armies and vehicles. O Marut's son![701] There is nothing that is impossible for you. Ravana, with all his armies, was no match for you in battle."

'Having been thus addressed by Bhima, Hanuman, bull among monkeys, replied in a soft and deep voice. "O mighty-armed one! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! It is as you say. O Bhimasena! That evil rakshasa was no match for me. But if I had killed that Ravana, the thorn of the worlds, Raghava's glory would have been diminished.[702] That is the reason I ignored him. By killing the rakshasa king, together with his armies, and

taking Sita back to his own city, that brave one established his fame in this world. O immensely wise brother! You are devoted to ensuring my welfare. Protected by Vayu, depart now, along a path that is safe and secure. O best among the Kuru lineage! This path will lead you to Sougandhika forest[703] and the grove of the lord of riches,[704] guarded by yakshas and rakshasas. Do not perform the rash act of plucking any flowers there yourself. A man must specially honour the gods there. O bull among the Bharata lineage! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! When satisfied with sacrifices, oblations, reverence and mantras, the gods exhibit favours towards the faithful. O son![705] Therefore, do not act out of bravery. Observe your own dharma. Abiding by your own dharma, know and follow the supreme dharma. Without knowing dharma and without serving the aged, even the likes of Brihaspati are incapable of comprehending dharma and artha. One should carefully discriminate among situations where that which is not dharma goes by the name of dharma, and that which is dharma goes by the name of that which is not dharma. Those who are deluded in intelligence cannot distinguish. Dharma results from conduct. The Vedas are established on dharma. Sacrifices originate from the Vedas. The gods are established in sacrifices. The gods are sustained through sacrifices and rituals prescribed in the Vedas. Even men sustain themselves through the ordinances decreed by Brihaspati and Ushanas[706]—buying and selling, mining, trading, agriculture and animal husbandry. Everything is sustained through such vocations and dharma. For the three varnas,[707] three pursuits have been indicated in the sacred texts—study of the three Vedas, following a vocation and governing. When these are properly followed, the world's welfare is ensured. But if there is no pursuit of dharma and these three routes to dharma are not followed, this earth is not controlled and there is no governance. If beings do not follow dharma and their vocations, they will perish. By regularly following the three pursuits, beings prosper. There is one characteristic that marks the eternal dharma of the three varnas—sacrificing, studying and giving. These are three pursuits that are common to everyone. Performing sacrifices, studying and accepting[708] constitute the dharma of brahmanas. Protection is that of kshatriyas and providing sustenance is the dharma of vaishyas. Servitude to the other three varnas is known to be the dharma of shudras, as it is of those who are in their preceptor's house[709] and cannot therefore beg for alms or perform oblations and vows. O Kounteya! Your dharma is that of a kshatriya. Your dharma is protection. Be humble. Control your senses and follow your own dharma. He who has consulted elders, the honest, the intelligent and the learned, and then resorts to punishment by the staff, governs well. But a decadent one suffers. When a king punishes and rewards according to what is needed, it is then that the contours of the world are properly laid out. Therefore, spies must constantly be used to ascertain the state of the nation, the fortifications, the forces of friends and enemies, and their conditions of prosperity and

adversity. Kings possess four means that lead to success—wise counsel, valour, punishment and reward and sagacity. Whether applied together or in isolation, *sama, dana, danda* and *bheda* can lead to success.[710] O bull among the Bharata lineage! Spies and counsel are the source of policies. Good counsel leads to success and one should consult with those who are skilled. In secret matters, one should not consult with a woman, with a fool, with a child, with one who is greedy, with one who is mean and with one who is touched by insanity. One should only consult with wise ones and get tasks undertaken by those who are capable. Policies must be devised by those who are gentle. Fools must always be avoided. Those who follow dharma must be engaged in matters related to dharma, learned ones in matters connected to artha, eunuchs in matters connected to women and cruel ones for the performance of cruel deeds. The nature of action, what should be done and what should not be done and the reasons behind any particular task, should be decided on the basis of the relative strengths and weaknesses of one's enemy, as well as one's own. Using one's intelligence, favours should be shown to righteous ones who have sought refuge. However, evil and unskilled ones must be repressed. When a king follows reward and chastisement properly, the boundaries of the world are laid out properly. O Partha! This is the difficult and terrible dharma that I have delineated for you. Follow this humbly, in accordance with what has been prescribed as your own dharma. The brahmanas go to heaven through the dharma of austerities, control of the self and oblations. The vaishyas obtain the desired objective through donations, serving guests and rituals. Like that, the kshatriyas attain heaven on earth through protection and punishments. Without being addicted to desire and hatred, without avarice and controlling their anger, and chastising appropriately, they reach the worlds attained by the virtuous."'

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Vaishampayana said, 'Then the monkey contracted his huge body, which he had extended through his own wishes. He once again embraced Bhimasena with his arms. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Having been thus embraced by his brother, Bhima's exhaustion was destroyed and everything was at ease. With tears in his eyes, the ape once again told Bhima, in a voice that was choked and affectionate. "O brave one! Return to your own abode. But remember me in your thoughts. O best of the Kurus! Do not tell anyone that I am here. O immensely powerful one! When they have obtained leave from the abode of the lord of the riches, the wives of the gods and the gandharvas come to this region and to this time. My eyes have been satisfied and I have remembered Raghava. O Bhima! Through you, I have touched another human body. O brave one! O Kounteya! Now let your sight of me be successful too. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Because of our brotherhood, ask for a boon. If you wish that I should go to Hastinapura and kill the low sons of Dhritarashtra, I will do that. Or I will grind

that city down with rocks. O immensely strong one! I will perform whatever deed you desire." On hearing these words of the great-souled one, Bhima was delighted and replied to Hanuman with happiness in his heart, "O bull among apes! You have already done everything for me. O mighty-armed one! May you be fortunate. Forgive me. I desire your favours. With a protector as valorous as you, all of us Pandavas have found a protector. With your energy, all of us will triumph over our enemies." Having heard these words, Hanuman told Bhimasena, "From brotherhood and out of my well wishes towards you, I will do that which will bring you pleasure. O brave one! O mighty-armed one! When you rush into the enemy's battle formations, armed with arrows and spears, and utter a roar like that of a lion, I will add my own roars to that of yours. Seated on Vijaya's flagstaff,[711] I will let loose terrible roars that will rob the enemies of their lives." Having said this, he disappeared.

'When that supreme of apes had left, Bhima, foremost among strong ones, travelled along that road to the extensive Gandhamadana. He thought about his[712] resplendent body, unmatched on earth. He thought about Dasharathi's greatness and power. Travelling eagerly towards Sougandhika forest, he made lovely forests and groves tremble. He saw forests with blossoms and many colourful flowers and lotuses. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! He saw mad elephants that were streaked with mud, like masses of monsoon clouds. Proceeding fast, the handsome one saw bucks with does in the forest. They had grass in their mouths and their darting eyes looked at him. With great valour, Bhimasena entered the mountain that was infested with buffaloes, boars and tigers, as if forest trees that were in blossom, stirred by the breeze and with branches lowered by the burden of delicate and copper-red shoots, had invited him in. He passed ponds teeming with lotuses, with beautiful tirthas and groves, swarming with intoxicated bees. The lotuses seemed to join their hands in salutation. But Bhima's mind was set on the peak of the mountain, full of flowers. With Droupadi's words providing sustenance, he travelled faster. When the day had turned,[713] in the forest that was infested with deer, he saw a wide river. It was full of unblemished and golden lotuses. It was aswarm with intoxicated karandavas[714] and adorned with chakravakas.[715] It was as if a garland of spotless lotuses had been designed for the mountain. Near that river, the greatly powerful one saw the large Sougandhika forest. It was as radiant as the rising sun and brought him joy. On seeing this, Pandu's son thought that his desires had been satisfied. His mind went out to his beloved, who was suffering as a result of dwelling in the forest.'

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Vaishampayana said, 'On the peak of Kailasa and in that beautiful grove, he saw that beautiful pond, guarded by rakshasas. Its source was the mountainous waterfalls that

were near Kubera's abode. It was extremely beautiful, with a lot of shade and full of many trees and creepers. It was covered with yellow lotuses and divine golden lotuses. It made the world pure. It was auspicious and extraordinary to behold. Pandava, Kunti's son, saw the clear, cool, light and pure water there, like amrita. He drank a lot of that auspicious water. The beautiful pond was covered with sougandhika lotuses. There were golden lotuses, with supreme fragrance. The stalks were made out of lapis lazuli.[716] They were beautiful and had many colours. Disturbed by the swans and the *karandakas*,[717] they scattered white pollen. This was the pleasure ground of the great-souled Kubera, king of the yakshas. It was shown great homage by the gandharvas, the apsaras and the gods. It was frequented by the rishis, yakshas, kimpurushas, rakshasas and kinnaras and was protected well by Vaishravana.[718]

'On seeing that celestial pond, the immensely strong Kounteya Bhimasena was filled with great delight. On the instructions of their king,[719] hundreds and thousands of rakshasas, named *krodhavashas*, stood guard, armed with many different kinds of weapons. They saw Kounteya, the destroyer of enemies. Bhima, terrible in valour, was clad in deerskin and golden armour for his upper arms. He was armed and his sword was girded. When they saw him fearlessly advance to gather the lotuses, they shouted at one another, "Why has this maharatha, tiger among men, come here? He is clad in deerskin and bears arms. Inquire." Then all of them approached the mighty-armed Vrikodara and asked the resplendent one, "Who are you? Tell us. You wear the garments of a hermit and we see that you are attired in bark. O immensely intelligent one. Tell us why you have come."'

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'Bhima replied, "I am Pandava Bhimasena. I am next in birth to Dharma's son.[720] O rakshasas! I have come with my brothers to the extensive Badari. There, Panchali saw the supreme sougandhika. The wind carried it from here and she immediately wanted many more. O those who roam in the night! Know that I have come here to gather flowers, to do that which brings pleasure to the one with the unblemished limbs, my wife in accordance with dharma."

'The rakshasas said, "O bull among men! This is Kubera's beloved pleasure garden. One who is subject to the laws of mortal earth cannot sport here. O Vrikodara! Devarshis, yakshas and gods have to seek the permission of the lord of the yakshas before they can drink or amuse themselves here. O Pandava! So do the gandharvas and the apsaras before sporting here. If an evil-minded one sports here against these rules, insulting the lord of riches, there is no doubt that he will meet with destruction. Ignoring him, you wish to take these lotuses away by force. Why do you then describe yourself as Dharmaraja's brother?"

‘Bhima replied, “O rakshasas! I do not see the lord of riches anywhere near. Even if I were to see the great king, I would not trouble him by asking. It is the eternal dharma that kings should not beg. I do not wish to deviate from the dharma of kshatriyas by even a trifle. This beautiful lotus pond has been created from mountainous water springs. It is not part of the abode of the great-souled Kubera. It belongs equally to all beings, just as it does to Vaishravana. Since this is the state of affairs, who should ask whom for permission?”’

Vaishampayana said, ‘Having said this to all the rakshasas, the powerful Bhimasena plunged in. All the rakshasas tried to restrain him, asking him to desist. They angrily abused him from all directions. But not paying any attention to the rakshasas, the one who was terrible in valour plunged in. All of them tried to restrain the immensely energetic one. “Grasp him.” “Bind him.” “Slash him.” “We will cook and feed on Bhimasena.” Angrily uttering such words, they raised their arms and distending their eyes, swiftly rushed at him. He grasped his giant club, inlaid with gold, and like Yama’s staff. He grasped it and swiftly hurled himself at them, shouting, “Stay there! Stay there!” The extremely terrible krodhavashas suddenly rushed at him with great force. They had spears, battleaxes and other weapons. Desiring to kill him, they encircled Bhima in terrible fashion. But the powerful one was born in Kunti’s womb from the wind. He was swift and brave and the destroyer of his enemies. He was always devoted to truth and dharma. In valour, he was incapable of being vanquished by any foe. The great-souled one used many techniques. He destroyed the weapons of his enemies. On the banks of that pond, the brave one slew hundreds of them, including those who were the foremost. On seeing his valour and strength, the strength of his knowledge and the strength of his arms and unable to withstand him, despite their numbers, they suddenly fled in all directions, the foremost ones having been slain. They were destroyed and crushed, and bereft of their senses, took to the sky. Crushed by Bhima, the krodhavashas were shattered and ran away, towards the peak of Kailasa.

‘Having thus vanquished hordes of daityas and danavas in battle, like Shakra, the one who was victorious over his enemies again plunged into the pond and collected lotuses, in accordance with his desires. Having drunk the water, which was like amrita, his valour and energy were completely restored. He plucked and gathered sougandhika lotuses, with a supreme fragrance. The krodhavashas had been overcome with Bhima’s strength. They went to the lord of riches and extremely frightened, told him about Bhima’s valour and strength in battle. Having heard their words, the god laughed and told the rakshasas, “Let Bhima take as many lotuses as he wishes for Krishna. I know the reason.” Having taken their leave of the lord of riches and having controlled their anger, they returned to the foremost among the Kurus. They saw Bhima alone in that pond full of lotuses, sporting happily.’

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Vaishampayana said, 'Then the bull among the Bharata lineage started to gather large numbers of those precious, divine, unblemished and colourful flowers. Suddenly, a large storm arose. It swiftly threw up the stones from below. It was harsh to the touch and carried with it the portents of battle. A giant meteor descended, immensely fiery in the storm. Covered in the darkness, the sun's rays were dimmed and it lost its radiance. While Bhima resorted to his terrible valour, a terrible whirlwind gathered. The earth began to tremble and a storm of dust descended. The directions turned red. Animals and birds screamed in harsh voices. Everything was covered in darkness and nothing could be seen.'

'On seeing these extraordinary happenings, Yudhishthira, Dharma's son and the foremost among speakers, spoke these words. "Who is attempting to overcome us? O Pandavas! You are always powerful in battle. Be fortunate and prepared. From what I can see, the time for displaying our valour has come." Having spoken these words, the king looked around. But Yudhishthira, Dharma's son, could not see Bhima. Then the destroyer of enemies asked Krishna and the twins, who were close by, about his brother Bhima, the performer of terrible deeds in battle. "O Panchali! Did Bhima desire to perform some deed? Or has the brave one, who is addicted to valour, already performed some courageous deed? Portents can suddenly be seen in all the directions. They indicate a great battle and foretell great dangers." The intelligent Krishna, his sweet-smiling and beloved queen, who always wished to bring him pleasure, replied to his words, "O king! A sougandhika was brought here by the wind today. I showed it to Bhimasena and lovingly told the brave one to bring many more back to me, if he should see them, and return quickly. O king! To bring me pleasure, the mighty-armed Pandava must have gone to the north-eastern direction." Having heard these words, the king told the twins, "In that case, let us immediately go where Vrikodara has gone. Let the rakshasas bear the brahmanas who are exhausted and tired, as the case may be. O Ghatotkacha! You are the equal of the immortals. You carry Krishna. It is my certain view that Bhima has gone a long distance away. He has been away for a long time and he is like the wind in his speed. In swiftly leaping over the ground, he is like Vinata's son.[721] He will leap up into the sky and descend, as he pleases. O those who roam in the night![722] With the aid of your powers, we will follow him, before he causes any offence to the siddhas and those who are learned in the brahman." They agreed to these words.

'O bull among the Bharata lineage! They were all led by Hidimba's son, who was foremost among them and knew the region around Kubera's pond. In a delighted frame of mind, they grasped the Pandavas and many other brahmanas, together with Lomasha. All of them travelled together until they saw the grove and the extremely beautiful pond with sougandhika lotuses. They saw the intelligent and great-souled Bhima along its banks and the bodies of the large-eyed yakshas that he had slain. He

was standing on the banks of the river,[723] his club raised in his two arms, like Yama with a staff in his hand at the time of the destruction of beings. On seeing him, Dharmaraja embraced him again and again. He spoke to him in gentle words. “O Kounteya! What have you done? O fortunate one! Because of your courage, you have brought displeasure to the gods. If you wish to bring me pleasure, never commit such deeds again.” After having thus instructed Kounteya, they collected lotuses and amused themselves in that lotus pond, like the immortals.

‘At that time, the guards appeared. Their bodies were gigantic and they were armed with rocks. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! When they saw Dharmaraja, maharshi Lomasha, Nakula, Sahadeva and all the other bulls among brahmanas, they prostrated themselves in humility. Dharmaraja pacified those roamers of the night and they became calm. With Kubera’s permission, the bulls among the Kurus lived there for some time and sported themselves.’

Section Thirty-Four

Jatasura-vadha Parva

This parva has sixty-one shlokas and one chapter.

Vadha means to kill or slay and this section is about Bhima killing the demon named Jatasura.

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Vaishampayana said, 'The Pandavas lived comfortably on that mountain. When the rakshasas and Bhimasena's son[1] had left, and they were without Bhimasena, who had gone to roam around as he willed, a rakshasa abducted Dharmaraja, the twins and Krishna.[2] He had pretended to be a brahmana skilled in mantras and well versed in weapons. Having said this, he had served the Pandavas every day. He lived with the Parthas, covetous of their quivers and bows and waited for his chance. He was known by the name of Jatasura. When Bhimsena, the destroyer of enemies, went out to hunt, he assumed a different form. It was distorted, terrible and gigantic. Having grasped all the weapons and seizing Droupadi and the three Pandavas, he fled. But with a great deal of effort, Pandava Sahadeva extricated himself. Shouting for Bhimasena, he ran in the direction that the immensely strong one had taken.

'While he was thus being abducted, Dharmaraja Yudhishthira told him, "O stupid one! Dharma declines in you, but you do not see it. Whether one is a human or whether one belongs to inferior species, the gandharvas, the yakshas and the rakshasas, birds and animals, draw their sustenance from humans and so do you. If there is prosperity in our world, there is prosperity in your world too. If our world suffers, the gods suffer along with us. They prosper through worship and oblations to the gods and the ancestors,[3] offered through rituals. O rakshasa! We are the guardians and the protectors of the kingdom. If kingdoms are unprotected, how can there be prosperity? How can there be happiness? Unless there has been an act of injury, no rakshasa should ever harm a king. O one who lives off men! We have not committed the least bit of injury. One should never injure friends and those who are trustful, those whose food has been partaken of and those who have provided shelter. You found shelter with us. We showed you honour and you lived happily. O one who is not wise! Having partaken of our food, how can you abduct us? Since your conduct is fruitless, your age is fruitless and your intelligence is fruitless, you deserve a fruitless death—and these words will not be fruitless today. If you are truly evil-minded and devoid of all dharma, then return our weapons and win Droupadi after vanquishing us in battle. But if you are driven by ignorance in your mind

and persist in performing this act, you will follow that which is not dharma and will only obtain ill fame in this world. O rakshasa! You have today laid your hands on this human woman. It is as if you have stirred up a vessel and drunk poison from it." Then Yudhishthira bore down heavily on him and oppressed by this weight, he[4] could not travel very fast.

'Yudhishthira told Nakula and Droupadi, "Do not be frightened of this stupid rakshasa. I have robbed him of his speed. Pavana's mighty-armed son cannot be far away.[5] He will arrive in an instant and the rakshasa will have no future." O king! On seeing that the rakshasa was deluded of his intelligence, Sahadeva spoke to Kunti's son, Yudhishthira. "O king! Nothing brings greater merit to a kshatriya than to fall in the field of battle and give up his life, or triumph over an enemy. O scorcher of enemies! Let us fight him in the field of battle. Either he will kill us, or we will kill him. O mighty-armed one! O king! The time and the place are right. O one for whom valour is truth! The time has come to show the dharma of kshatriyas. Whether we triumph or whether we are slain, we will attain the supreme objective. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! If the rakshasa is still alive when the sun sets, I will no longer be able to say that I am a kshatriya. O rakshasa! Stop! I am Pandava Sahadeva. Either kill me and take them today, or fall senseless." While he was speaking thus, Bhimasena appeared by chance. The mighty-armed one looked like Vasava[6] with his vajra. He saw his two brothers and the famous Droupadi, and Sahadeva on the ground, challenging the rakshasa. He saw the stupid rakshasa, who had lost his path, his intelligence having been robbed by time. Driven by destiny, he was roaming around here and there.

'On seeing his brothers and Droupadi being thus abducted, the mighty-armed Bhima was overcome with rage and told the rakshasa, "I had got to know about you earlier, when I saw you scrutinize our weapons. But though I did not have my trust in you, I did not kill you then. You were in the form of a brahmana and you had not uttered any unpleasant words towards us. You did what brought us pleasure and you did nothing that brought us displeasure. You were in the form of an innocent brahmana who was a guest. Anyone who kills such a person, even if he knows him to be a rakshasa, goes to hell. That apart, the time for your killing was not ripe. That time is ripe now, since your inclination is of this nature. Extraordinary destiny has made you abduct Krishna. You have swallowed the hook that stretches from the line of fate, like a fish in the water. How will you escape from me today? You will not be able to reach the region you have left for and where your mind has already gone. You will not be able to reach and you will traverse the path travelled by Baka and Hidimba."[7] The rakshasa was driven by destiny. Having been thus addressed by Bhima, he was frightened and threw them all down.[8] Then he approached, so as to fight. His lips trembling in anger, he told Bhima, "O deluded one! I did not lose my directions because I was deluded. I was waiting for

your sake. I have heard about the rakshasas whom you killed in battle. With your blood, I will offer funeral oblations to them today." Having been thus addressed, Bhima smilingly licked the corners of his mouth. He was bursting with rage, like time and death personified.

'With great force, he dashed at the rakshasa, to engage him in a bout of wrestling. On seeing that Bhima stood ready to fight, the rakshasa also forcefully dashed towards him, like Bali towards the wielder of the vajra.[9] When they were about to engage in that terrible battle with arms, Madri's two sons[10] were also extremely angered and rushed forward. But Vrikodara, Kunti's son, laughingly restrained them. He said, "Behold. I am capable of handling this rakshasa. O king![11] By myself, with my brothers, by the dharma that I have observed well and by my oblations, I swear that I will finish off this rakshasa." Having said this, the two brave ones challenged each other. The rakshasa and Vrikodara grasped each other with their arms. They did not spare each other. Angrily, Bhima and the rakshasa engaged each other in a terrible battle, like a god and a danava. Uprooting trees, the two immensely strong ones hurled them at each other, roaring like clouds when the summer season is over. Those two, supreme among strong ones, shattered the trunks of trees with the force of their thighs. They rushed at each other, each desirous of victory. The duel with trees went too, causing the destruction of many large trees, like that ancient battle between the brothers Vali and Sugriva, lions among apes.[12] For some time, they repeatedly hurled trees at each other and struck each other, continuously roaring. When all the trees in the region had been torn down, and in an attempt to kill each other they had reduced them to hundreds of heaps, they immediately took up rocks. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Those two immensely strong ones fought, like a king of mountains fighting with clouds. Those hard and terrible rocks flew around, like the vajra. They repeatedly struck each other with these. They were insolent because of their strength. After this, they rushed at each other and grasped each other with their arms, tugging like elephants. They struck each other with extremely terrible fists. The two great-souled ones raised a noise by gnashing their teeth. Then Bhima clenched his fist, like a serpent with five heads, and struck the rakshasa's neck with great force. The rakshasa was exhausted from the force of Bhimasena's blow with the fist. On seeing this, Bhimasena grasped the one who was extremely tired. The mighty-armed one, equal to the immortals, raised him up in his two arms. With great force, Bhima then flung him down on the ground. Pandava shattered all his limbs. Holding him with his elbow, he detached the head from the trunk. As a result of Bhimasena's force, Jatasura's head was severed and fell down on the ground, drenched in blood, the eyes bulging and the teeth clenched, like a fruit dislodged from a tree. Having killed him, the mighty archer went to Yudhishthira. The foremost among brahmanas praised him, like the Maruts praise Vasava.'

Section Thirty-Five

Yaksha-yuddha Parva

This parva has 727 shlokas and eighteen chapters.

Chapter 452(155): 90 shlokas
Chapter 453(156): 31 shlokas
Chapter 454(157): 70 shlokas
Chapter 455(158): 59 shlokas
Chapter 456(159): 35 shlokas
Chapter 457(160): 37 shlokas
Chapter 458(161): 29 shlokas
Chapter 459(162): 16 shlokas
Chapter 460(163): 53 shlokas
Chapter 461(164): 58 shlokas
Chapter 462(165): 23 shlokas
Chapter 463(166): 23 shlokas
Chapter 464(167): 28 shlokas
Chapter 465(168): 30 shlokas
Chapter 466(169): 35 shlokas
Chapter 467(170): 69 shlokas
Chapter 468(171): 17 shlokas
Chapter 469(172): 24 shlokas

Yuddha *means battle or fight and the section is named after a fight between Bhima and the* yakshas. *In this section, the Pandavas visit the sage Vrishaparva on Mount Gandhamadana and then travel to the hermitage of the sage Arshtishena, where they dwell, waiting for Arjuna's return. Reminiscent of Section 33, Droupadi sends Bhima to search for celestial flowers. Bhima fights with yakshas and rakshasas and kills the rakshasa Maniman. The Pandavas meet Kubera and Indra. Arjuna returns and recounts his adventures, repeating much of what has already been said in Sections 31 and 32 (Volume 1). These parts of Section 35 are not only repetitive, and sometimes inconsistent, they don't quite seem to belong. The only new information is about Arjuna's fight with the* nivatakavacha *demons and the demons who inhabited Hiranyapura.*

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Vaishampayana said, 'When the rakshasa had been killed, the lord Kounteya, the king,[1] returned to Narayana's hermitage and began to live there again. One day, he assembled all his brothers, together with Droupadi, and remembering his brother Jaya,[2] told them, "Pure in our ways, we have lived in the forest and four years have passed. Bibhatsu promised that in the fifth year, he would come to the king of the mountains, the supreme peak that is white at the top. In a desire to meet him, we should also go to that region. The immensely energetic Partha[3] had decided on the time and had earlier made an agreement with me. 'I will live as a student for five years.' We will see Gandivadhanva, the destroyer of enemies, there, after he has returned from the world of the gods with the weapons he has obtained." Having uttered these words, the Pandava

consulted all the brahmanas and informed all the ascetics about the reasons. Having thus pleased the ones who were terrible in their austerities, Partha[4] circumambulated them. The brahmanas approved, because this was auspicious and would bring about welfare. "O bull among the Bharata lineage! These difficulties will soon be replaced by happiness. O one learned in dharma! After having traversed the road, you will protect the earth in accordance with the dharma of kshatriyas."[5] Then the king accepted the words of these ascetics.

'The destroyer of enemies departed with his brothers and the brahmanas. The fortunate one was accompanied by Droupadi and followed by Hidimba's son[6] and the other rakshasas and protected by Lomasha. He travelled part of the way on foot. In other parts, the immensely energetic one, who was rigid in his vows, together with his brothers, was carried by the rakshasas. Reflecting on the many difficulties, King Yudhishthira headed in a northern direction, infested by lions, tigers and elephants. He saw the mountains Mainaka and Kailasa, the foothills of Gandhamadana and the tall peak of Meru. There were many auspicious streams higher up on the mountains. He reached the sacred plateau of the Himalayas on the seventeenth day. O king! Near Gandhamadana, the Pandava saw the auspicious crest of the Himalayas, covered with many trees and creepers and the extremely holy hermitage of Vrishaparva, surrounded by many trees in blossom that grew along whirlpools of water. The destroyers of enemies, the Pandavas, approached rajarshi Vrishaparva, with dharma in his soul. When he welcomed them, their exhaustion vanished. The rajarshi welcomed those bulls of the Bharata lineage, as if they were his sons. Thus honoured, those destroyers of enemies remained there for seven nights. On the eighth day, after consulting the rishi Vrishaparva who was famous in the worlds, they decided to start on their journey. One by one, they introduced the brahmanas to Vrishaparva. He honoured them, and they remained in his charge for the moment, like relatives. The Pandavas also left their supreme garments and pure ornaments in Vrishaparva's hermitage. He[7] was learned, skilled, knowledgeable on everything concerning dharma and knew the past and the future. The one who was learned in dharma instructed the bulls of the Bharata lineage, like his sons. Having obtained his permission, the brave and great-souled ones left in a northern direction, accompanied by Krishna and the great-souled brahmanas. King Vrishaparva went with them for a short distance. Then entrusting the Pandavas to the immensely energetic brahmanas, and instructing and blessing the sons of Kunti, Vrishaparva returned, after having given them directions about the road to follow.

'Truth was valour for Kounteya Yudhishthira. He proceeded on foot with his brothers, through a region that was infested with many kinds of animals. They sometimes dwelt on the slopes of mountains, covered with many different kinds of trees. On the fourth day, the Pandavas reached Mount Shveta. It looked like a gigantic cloud and was

beautiful, with plenty of water. The beautiful top was covered with jewels and gold and had many peaks. They followed the route that had been indicated by Vrishaparva and saw many mountains in that region. They climbed higher up the mountain, with extremely inaccessible caverns and many impenetrable spots, without any discomfort. Dhoumya, Krishna and the great rishi Lomasha travelled together, and none of them faltered. Those immensely valiant ones reached the great Mount Malyavan. It was full of the noise of many animals and birds and was populated by many kinds of birds. It was extremely beautiful and was frequented by masses of monkeys. There were sacred ponds full of lotuses. There were pools and extensive groves. With their body hair standing up, they happily saw Mount Gandhamadana, the habitation of kimpurushas, frequented by vidyadharas and lady kinnaras, infested with elephants and lions and innumerable *sharabhas*.[8] They reached a region that resounded with the sweet sounds of many animals. With all this, Gandhamadana resembled the pleasure garden of Nandana.[9] In a happy frame of mind, Pandu's brave sons slowly entered this beautiful and sacred forest that brought delight to the mind and the heart. With Droupadi and the great-souled brahmanas, the brave ones heard the delightful, pleasant, melodious and charming sounds emerging from the mouths of birds.

'They saw many trees that were bent down because of the burden of their fruit. All of them were full of every kind of fruit and were radiant with every kind of flower—mangoes, blossoming hog-plums,[10] coconuts, *tindukas*,[11] *ajatakas*,[12] jiras,[13] pomegranates, citrus trees,[14] jackfruit, breadfruit,[15] plantains,[16] dates, tamarinds,[17] *paravatas*,[18] *kshoudras*,[19] beautiful *nipas*,[20] *bilvas*,[21] wood-apples,[22] roseapples,[23] *kashmaris*,[24] badaris, figs,[25] udumbaras,[26] fig trees,[27] holy fig trees,[28] *kshirinas*,[29] marking-nuts,[30] myrobalans,[31] *haritakas*,[32] *bibhitakas*,[33] *ingudas*,[34] *karaviras*,[35] *tindukas*[36] with a lot of fruit and many other trees that were on the slopes of Gandhamadana. There was succulent fruit as tasty as amrita. There were many champakas,[37] ashokas,[38] *ketakas*,[39] *bakulas*,[40] *pumnagas*,[41] *saptaparnis*,[42] *karnikaras*,[43] ketakas, *patalas*,[44] *kutajas*,[45] beautiful coral trees,[46] blue lotuses,[47], *parijatas*,[48] *kovidaras*,[49] pine-trees,[50] *shalas*,[51] palms,[52] *tamalas*,[53] *priyalas*,[54] bakulas, silk cotton,[55] *kimshukas*,[56] ashokas,[57] *shimshapas*[58] and *saralas*.[59] These were full of *chakoras*,[60] woodpeckers,[61] large bees,[62] parrots,[63] cuckoos, sparrows,[64] *haritas*,[65] birds,[66] pheasants,[67] *priyavratas*,[68] *chatakas*[69] and many other kinds of birds. They warbled beautiful notes that were pleasant to the ear. They also saw beautiful ponds full of clear water, with white water lilies,[70] white lotuses,[71] red lotuses,[72] blue lotuses,[73] white lotuses[74] and lotuses[75] on all sides. There were geese,[76] ruddy geese,[77] ospreys,

waterfowl, ducks,[78] *plavas*,[79] swans, cranes, cormorants and many other aquatic birds everywhere. There were beautiful ponds full of lotuses. Excited bumblebees hummed there, intoxicated by the nectar of red lotuses that bloomed during the day. Red pollen fell into the lotus cups. They saw these beautiful sights on the slopes of Gandhamadana. And in the beautiful clusters of lotuses and groves of creepers that were everywhere, they saw peacocks with their peahens. They were extremely maddened by the desire that the drumming of the clouds brought. In sweet and melodious tones, they uttered their calls. The peacocks spread out the coloured plumage of their tails and danced redolently, as did other playful forest birds. Others roamed happily with their beloved ones in the valleys that were covered with creepers and lantanas. Where the woods were clear, they saw other birds in the holes of trees, beautiful and with splendid tails spread out like crowns.[80]

'They saw graceful *sindhuvara* trees on the peaks of the mountain. They looked like Manmatha's[81] javelins, covered with golden blossoms. There were beautiful *karnikaras*, blossoming like handsome earrings. They saw *kurubakas*[82] flowering in the forest, like a volley of Kama's[83] arrows, increasing desire among those who are in love. They saw *tilakas*,[84] like beautiful tilaka marks on the forest. They saw beautiful mango trees that were like Ananga's[85] arrows, abuzz with bees and clusters of flowers. There were many other trees on the peak of the mountain, like garlands—like gold, with flowers like a forest conflagration, red, black like collyrium and like lapis lazuli. There were shalas, tamalas, patalas and bakulas. Thus, one by one, the brave ones saw these everywhere on the slopes of Gandhamadana—frequented by masses of elephants and lions and tigers, resounding with the roars of sharabhas and many other cries, and covered everywhere with fruit and flowers. The forests were yellow-tinged like the sun. There were no thorns anywhere, or trees without blossoms. The trees on the slope of Gandhamadhana were tender, and dense with foliage and fruit. On the peaks of the mountain, the Parthas also saw lakes and rivers that were like clear crystal, populated by birds with white feathers, with the sounds of swans and cranes, with colourful lotuses and blue lotuses, with fragrant garlands and succulent fruit. The trees on the peak of the mountain were radiant with blossoms. There were many other groves full of trees there. There were many kinds of creepers, laden with leaves, flowers and fruit.

'On seeing those trees on that supreme of mountains, Yudhishthira told Bhimasena in affectionate words, "O Bhima! Look at this beautiful region all around us, the playground of the gods. We followed a path no human has followed. O Vrikodara! We have achieved success. O Partha! Creepers, lantanas and blossoms embrace the supreme of trees and adorn Gandhamadana's peak. O Bhima! Listen to the sound of the calls of peacocks, together with peahens, on the peak of this mountain. Chakoras, shatapatras, intoxicated cuckoos and *sarikas*[86] are perching themselves on these gigantic trees, full of

foliage and flowers. O Partha! The birds are scarlet, yellow and red, on the tops of the trees. Many other jivas and jivakas are glancing at each other. Cranes can be seen on the green and red spots of grass that are everywhere and near the mountain springs. They are warbling in a beautiful voice, charming to all beings. There are bees, ruddy geese and birds with backs tinged in red. There are elephants with four tusks, with the hue of lotuses, and with the she-elephants. This great lake is beautiful, tinged with the hue of lapis lazuli. Water streams down from many waterfalls. O Bhima! They shine like the sun and are like autumn clouds. They adorn this giant mountain, with much silver and many minerals. In some places, it is dark like collyrium. In others, it is golden. In some places, the minerals are greenish yellow. In others, they have the complexion of ingudas. There are mountainous caverns that have the hue of evening clouds. Some are as red as rabbits. Other minerals are golden red. They are white and black, like clouds with the rays of the rising sun. In their many different forms, they are bringing great radiance to the mountain. O Partha! As Vrishaparva had said, gandharvas can be seen on the peak of the mountain, together with their wives, and kimpurushas. O Bhima! The sounds of songs, melodies and hymns can be heard in many ways, charming to all beings. Behold the great, pure and auspicious Ganga, the river of the gods. It is full of masses of swans and is frequented by rishis and kinnaras. O Kounteya! O destroyer of enemies! Behold this king of mountains, full of minerals, streams, kinnaras, animals, birds, gandharvas, apsaras, lovely woods, many types of predators and with a hundred different peaks." Those brave ones, the scorchers of enemies, were delighted in their minds at having traversed that supreme path and their hearts were not satisfied at looking at this king of the mountains. They then saw the hermitage of rajarshi Arshtishena,[87] full of garlands and trees laden with fruit. They went to the sage Arshtishena, who was learned in dharma and was so severe in his austerities that he was lean and seemed to be made up of veins alone.'

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Vaishampayana said, 'Having approached the ascetic, who had burnt away all his sins, Yudhishthira announced his name and happily greeted him, with his head bowed down. After that, Krishna, Bhima and the famous twins lowered their heads before the rajarshi and stood there, surrounding him. In that fashion, Dhoumya, learned in dharma and the priest of the Pandavas, approached the rishi who was rigid in his vows, in accordance with propriety. Through his divine sight, the sage who was learned in dharma had already recognized Pandu's sons, the best of the Kuru lineage, and greeting them, asked them to be seated. The great ascetic showed honours to the wise bull among the Kurus.[88]

'When he was seated with his brothers, he asked him about his welfare. "Does your mind ever turn towards that which is not true or do you follow dharma? O Partha! Does

your conduct towards your mother and father ever diminish? Are your preceptors, all the elders and those who are learned worshipped by you? O Partha! Does your mind ever turn towards evil acts? O best of the Kuru lineage! Do you know how to reward a good deed and ignore an evil deed? Do you treat them according to the law and without any conceit? Do virtuous ones rejoice when such deserving ones are honoured by you? Though you dwell in the forest, do you follow that which is dharma? O Partha! Has Dhoumya been tormented by the way you treat him? Do you follow the dharma of donations, austerities, purity, uprightness and forbearance? O Partha! Do you follow the conduct of your fathers and grandfathers? O Pandava! Do you tread the path followed by the rajarshis? It is said that when a son or a grandson is born in one's lineage, the ancestors in the world of the ancestors either sorrow or laugh. 'What will happen to us if he performs evil deeds? Or will we prosper because he performs good deeds?' O Partha! He who honours his father, his mother, the fire, the preceptor and his own soul as the fifth, conquers both the worlds.[89] There are rishis who live on water and on the wind. At the time of *parvasandhi*,[90] they fly through the air and visit this greatest of mountains. O king! Kimpurushas, lovers with their beloveds, devoted to each other, can be seen on the peaks of this mountain. O Partha! Many masses of gandharvas and apsaras can be seen. They are attired in spotless garments and in those made of silk. There are masses of handsome and garlanded vidyadharas and masses of great serpents, giant birds[91] and other serpents. At the time of parvasandhi, the sounds of kettledrums, *panava*s,[92] conch shells and drums can be heard on this mountain. O bull among the Bharata lineage! You can hear all of that from this place. But you should never act or think so as to venture closer. O supreme among the Bharata lineage! Beyond this point, it is impossible to go. That place is the sporting ground of the gods, beyond the access of humans. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! At that spot, all beings hate the fickle deeds of humans and rakshasas chastise them. O Yudhishthira! Beyond the peak of this mountain can be seen the radiant objective of devarshis, those who are supremely successful. O Partha! O destroyer of enemies! If one is fickle enough to continue on the journey beyond this point, the rakshasas kill him with iron spears and other means. At the time of parvasandhi, Vaishravana Naravahana[93] can be seen there in his prosperity, surrounded by apsaras. All the beings then see the lord of the rakshasas seated on the peak of the mountain, as resplendent as the rising sun. O supreme among the Bharata lineage! The peak of that mountain is the sporting ground of gods, danavas, siddhas and Vaishravana. O son![94] At the time of parvasandhi, Tumburu[95] worships the lord of riches there and the sounds of his songs and hymns can be heard on Gandhamadana. O son! O Yudhishthira! At the time of parvasandhi, all the many different beings witness this wonderful sight here. O best of the Pandavas! Dwell here. Live on succulent fruit and other tasty food, until you see Arjuna. O son! Now that you have reached this place,

you should never be fickle. O best of those who wield weapons! After living here, as you desire, and sporting yourself, you will protect the earth.”’

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Janamejaya asked, ‘How long did the great-souled sons of Pandu, all of them divine in valour, live on Mount Gandhamadana? O virtuous one! What did those great-souled ones, valorous in the world, subsist on, while they lived there? Tell me. Tell me in detail about Bhimasena’s prowess. What did the mighty-armed one accomplish in those Himalaya mountains? O, supreme among brahmanas! Did he wage war against the yakshas again? Did they ever meet Vaishravana? Arshtishena did say that the lord of riches visits the place. O one rich in austerities! I wish to hear all this in great detail. I am never satiated on hearing about their deeds.’

Vaishampayana said, ‘After having heard the instructions of the immensely energetic one,[96] good for their welfare, the bulls among the Bharata lineage always abided by them. They lived on the food of hermits, succulent fruits, the meat of deer shot with pure arrows[97] and different kinds of pure honey. The Pandavas, bulls among the Bharata lineage, dwelt on the slopes of the Himalayas. In this fashion, they lived there for five years, listening to the many words spoken by Lomasha. O lord! Ghatotkacha had left earlier with all the other rakshasas, saying that he would return whenever the occasion demanded. Many months passed while the great-souled ones dwelt in Arshtishena’s hermitage and they witnessed many great marvels. While the Pandavas happily lived there and sported themselves, many immensely fortunate hermits and *charanas*, pure in soul and rigid in their vows, came to see the Pandavas and held conversations with the supreme of the Bharata lineage on celestial matters.

‘After some time, a suparna suddenly carried away a handsome and giant serpent that used to dwell in the giant lake. The mighty mountain began to tremble and many large trees were torn down. With all beings, the Pandavas witnessed this extraordinary sight. Then, from that supreme mountain, a wind blew towards the Pandavas and carried many different kinds of beautiful and fragrant flowers. With their well-wishers and with the famous Droupadi, the Pandavas saw those divine flowers, with five different colours. At that time, when the mighty-armed Bhimasena was comfortably seated at a secluded spot on the mountain, Krishna told him, “O bull among the Bharata lineage! As a result of the forceful wind generated from the suparna’s great force, five-coloured blossoms have been dropped near the river Ashvaratha and all the beings have witnessed this. Your great-souled brother,[98] always driven by truth, once restrained gandharvas, serpents, rakshasas and even Vasava himself, in Khandava. After killing the ones who resort to maya,[99] he obtained the bow Gandiva. You also possess enormous energy and great strength of arms. You are indomitable and irresistible and are the equal of

Shatakratu[100] in your strength. Let all the rakshasas be terrified of the force and strength of your arms. O Bhimasena! They will leave this mountain and flee in the ten directions. Then, devoid of all fear and delusion, let all your well-wishers behold this supreme mountain, auspicious and adorned with colourful flowers. O Bhima! This thought has been in my mind for a long time. Protected through the strength of your arms, I wish to see the top of this mountain." The scorcher of enemies was maddened by Droupadi's words. The mighty-armed one could not stand it, like an excellent bull that has been beaten. His gait was like that of a lion or a bull. He was handsome and noble. His complexion was like that of gold. He was spirited and strong, powerful and proud. The brave Pandava's eyes were red and his shoulders were wide. He was like a maddened elephant in his valour. His teeth were like a lion's and his shoulders were expansive. He was as tall as a young shala tree. The great-souled one was beautiful in all his limbs. His neck was like a conch shell[101] and his arms were huge. He grasped his gold-plated bow, his sword and his quivers. Like an insolent lion, or like a maddened elephant, the strong one rushed towards the mountain, free from fear or delusion.

'All the beings saw him, wielding his arrows, sword and bow, like a king of the beasts,[102] or a maddened elephant. The Pandava was devoid of fear or delusion. To increase Droupadi's happiness, he grasped a club and penetrated the king of the mountains. Partha, the son of the wind-god, was not bothered by fatigue, fear, lassitude or envy. He came to a terrible-looking and uneven passage that only one person could pass through at a time. Through this, the immensely strong one ascended the peak, as tall as many palm trees. Agitating kinnaras, great serpents, hermits, gandharvas and rakshasas, the immensely strong one ascended the mountain. The bull among the Bharata lineage saw Vaishravana's abode there. It was ornamented with golden and crystalline buildings. Gladdening all beings, an extremely pleasant breeze blew there, arising from Gandhamadana, and carrying all the various fragrances in it. There were many beautiful trees of diverse kinds, extraordinary and colourful and beyond all thought. The bull among the Bharata lineage then saw the abode of the lord of the rakshasas. It was covered on all sides by a network of gems. It was pure and was adorned with beautiful flowers. The mighty-armed Bhimasena stood there, as immobile as a mountain. Prepared to give up his life, he held a club, a sword, a bow and arrows in his hand. He then blew on his conch shell and this made the body hair of his enemies stand up. He twanged his bow and slapped his arms and terrified all beings.

'Their body hair standing up, yakshas, rakshasas and gandharvas rushed towards the sound and approached Pandava. The clubs, maces, swords, spears, lances and battleaxes, taken up by the yakshas and rakshasas in their arms, began to blaze. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Then a war started between them and him. With terrible force and speed, Bhima used his arrows to slice off the spears, lances and battleaxes hurled at him by those gigantic ones. The immensely powerful one pierced

the bodies of the rakshasas with his arrows and they roared, while roaming around in the sky and on the ground. A great shower of blood rained down on the immensely strong one, flowing from the bodies of the rakshasas in every direction. Many heads and bodies of the yakshas and the rakshasas were seen to be sliced off through what Bhima's mighty arms released. All the beings then saw the handsome Pandava enveloped by the rakshasas, like the sun with masses of clouds. But just as the sun penetrates everything with its rays, the mighty-armed and powerful one, with truth as his valour, penetrated all of them with his arrows. They uttered loud roars and victorious cries. But all the rakshasas could not see any delusion in Bhimasena. All their limbs were wounded with his arrows and they were oppressed with their fear of Bhimasena. Throwing away their great weapons, they roared in scared and terrible voices. Discarding their clubs, spears, swords, lances and battleaxes, they fled in a southern direction,[103] scared of the one whose bow was firm.

'There remained a mighty-armed and broad-chested rakshasa. His name was Maniman and he held a spear and a club in his hands. He was Vaishravana's friend. The mighty-armed one exhibited his authority and his manliness. On seeing them flee, he smilingly said, "On reaching Vaishravana's abode, what will you tell the lord of riches, since several of you have been defeated in battle by a single man?" Having spoken these words, the rakshasa restrained them and dashed towards Pandava, with a lance, a spear and a club in his hands. On seeing him forcefully approach, like a maddened elephant, Bhimasena pierced his side with three calf-toothed arrows.[104] Angered, Maniman grasped a gigantic club. Having grasped it, he hurled it with great force at Bhimasena. That gigantic club flashed like lightning in the sky and was extremely terrible. But Bhimasena shot many arrows that had been sharpened on stone. However, all those arrows were blunted on the club and despite their great force, could not restrain its swift force. But the valorous one knew the art of fighting with a club and the courageous Bhima warded off the blow. Then the wise rakshasa grasped an extremely terrible javelin with a golden shaft and struck him with it. The extremely terrible weapon was blazing in flames and uttered a loud roar. It pierced Bhima's right arm and swiftly fell down on the ground. Having been severely pierced by the javelin, Kouravya, skilled in fighting with clubs, a mighty archer and infinite in valour, grasped his club. That club was made entirely out of iron. Brandishing it, Bhima rushed with great speed towards the immensely powerful Maniman. Maniman also grasped a giant and blazing spear. Uttering a great roar, he flung it at Bhimasena with force. But the one who was skilled in fighting with clubs splintered the spear with the end of his club and rushed to destroy him, like Garuda against a serpent. With the club in his hand, the mighty-armed one suddenly jumped up in the sky. He roared in battle and flung it. With the speed of the wind, like the vajra hurled by Indra, it struck the rakshasa. Having killed him, it fell down on the ground, like a she-demon.[105] All the beings saw how the rakshasa, terrible

in strength, was felled by Bhimasena, like a bull by a lion. On seeing him dead on the ground, the remaining roamers of the night[106] uttered terrible cries of distress and fled in an eastern direction.'

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Vaishampayana said, 'On hearing the caves in the mountains resounding with many different kinds of noise and on not seeing Bhimasena, Kounteya Ajatashatru,[107] Madri's two sons, Dhoumya, Krishna,[108] the brahmanas and all the well-wishers were concerned. Leaving Droupadi in Arshtishena's care, the brave maharathas ascended up the mountain, arming themselves with weapons. Having reached the mountain's summit, the maharathas, mighty archers, looked around and saw Bhimasena, the destroyer of enemies, and the gigantic rakshasas, dead and writhing, mighty in strength and extremely terrible, but felled by Bhimasena. The one with the mighty arms carried a club, a sword and a bow and was as radiant as Maghavan,[109] after slaying all the danavas in battle. Having traversed the supreme route, the Parthas stepped over these, embraced Vrikodara and seated themselves. With those four mighty archers, the mountain's summit looked as beautiful as heaven with the immensely fortunate *lokapalas*, foremost among the gods.[110]

'Having seen Kubera's abode and the felled rakshasas, the brother told his seated brother Pandava.[111] "O Bhima! O brave one! Whether you performed this evil act out of bravery or delusion, it is unworthy of you, like falsehood to a hermit. Learned ones well versed in dharma say that one should not perform deeds that are against the wishes of a king. O Bhimasena! You have offended the thirty gods through your deed. O Partha! If one's mind is attracted to evil, disregarding artha and dharma, it is certain that there will be fruits from that evil deed. If you wish to do that which pleases me, do not ever act like this again." Kunti's son Yudhishthira, with dharma in his soul and knowledgeable about the different aspects of artha, spoke thus to his unvanquished brother. Having stopped speaking, the immensely energetic one began to reflect on the matter.

'Meanwhile, the rakshasas who had survived Bhimasena returned towards Kubera's abode. Travelling at great speed, they swiftly reached Vaishravana's abode. They wailed in terrible distress, oppressed by fear of Bhimasena. They had lost their arms and weapons. They were exhausted. Their garments were besmeared with blood. Their hair was dishevelled. O king! They told the lord of the yakshas, "O lord of riches! O god! Armed with clubs, maces, swords, javelins and lances, all the foremost warriors among the rakshasas have been killed. A man has swiftly penetrated the mountain and has single-handedly killed masses of krodhavashas[112] in battle. O lord of riches! O god! The foremost among chief rakshasas and yakshas have been killed and have lost their senses

and their spirits. He has taken the mountain. We are the only ones who have escaped. Your friend Maniman has also been killed. This act has been done by a single man. Now do what should be done hereafter.” Having heard this, the lord of all the masses of yakshas was enraged. His eyes became red with anger and he exclaimed, “How is that possible!” On hearing of Bhima’s second offence,[113] the lord of riches and the lord of the yakshas was angered and instructed his horses to be yoked. The beautiful chariot was yoked with supreme gandharva horses that possessed all the good qualities. They were clear in the eye and were swift and strong. They were adorned with many gems. The chariot resembled a cloud and was as high as the peak of a mountain. The beautiful horses were yoked to the chariot and were ready to fly, like arrows. They were excited and neighed at each other, as if foretelling victory. The illustrious king of the yakshas[114] ascended the grand chariot and the immensely radiant one departed, praised by the gods and the gandharvas. As the great-souled lord of riches left, all the yakshas accompanied him. Their eyes were red. They were golden in complexion. They were gigantic in form and immensely strong. They were armed with weapons and had girded their swords. There were one crore[115] yakshas. They were brave and indomitable in spirit. They surrounded their king.

‘The Pandavas saw the lord of riches, great and pleasant to look at, approach and their body hair stood up. On seeing Pandu’s maharatha sons, great in spirit, with their bows and swords in their hands, Kubera was also delighted. With great speed, they[116] alighted on the peak of the mountain like birds and stood around the lord of riches, who was at the forefront. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! On seeing that he[117] was delighted with the Pandavas, the yakshas and gandharvas, stood around indifferently.[118] The great-souled Pandavas, Nakula, Sahadeva and Dharma’s son, who was always devoted to dharma, bowed down in obeisance before the illustrious lord of riches. The maharathas knew in their hearts that they had committed a crime. Therefore, all of them surrounded the lord of riches, hands joined in salutation. The handsome lord of riches was seated on his supreme Pushpaka,[119] constructed by Vishvakarma[120] and coloured along the sides. Thousands of giant yakshas and rakshasas, swift in speed and with pointed ears, seated themselves below the seated one. Hundreds of gandharvas and masses of apsaras surrounded and waited on him, like Shatakratu surrounded by the gods. With a beautiful golden garland on his head and with arrows, sword and bow in his hand, Bhimasena looked at the lord of riches. Despite being wounded by the rakshasas, Bhima felt no fear or exhaustion. Even in that state, he looked at Kubera.

‘On seeing Bhima standing there, desiring to fight and with sharp arrows, Naravahana told Dharma’s son, “O Partha! All the beings know that you have the welfare of beings in your heart. Therefore, with your relatives, live on this mountain without any fear. O Pandava! Nor should you be angry because of Bhimasena’s deed. They[121] had already

been killed by destiny and your brother was only the instrument. Nor should you be ashamed at this violent deed of his. The destruction of the yakshas and the rakshasas had been determined by the gods earlier. O bull among the Bharata lineage! I am not angry with Bhimasena. I am pleased. I have already satisfied myself with this deed of Bhimasena's." Having said this to the king,[122] he spoke to Bhimasena, "O son![123] O supreme among the Kuru lineage! This will not prey on your mind. O Bhima! You have embarked on this act of violence for Krishna's sake. You have ignored me and the gods. You have destroyed the yakshas and the rakshasas, with the strength of your own arms. But even then, I am pleased with you. O Vrikodara! You have freed me from a terrible curse. Earlier, for some reason, I was cursed by the supreme rishi Agastya, because he had been angered. Because of your deed, I have now been freed from the curse following that transgression. O descendant of the Pandava lineage! O destroyer of enemies! Since I foresaw this grief, no crime attaches to you."

'Yudhishthira asked, "O illustrious one! Why were you cursed by the great-souled Agastya? O god! I wish to hear about the reasons behind the curse. It seems to me extraordinary that the wise one's anger did not instantly consume you, with all your armies and your attendants."

'Vaishravana replied, "O lord of men! There was a council of the gods in Kushavati. I was going there, surrounded by three hundred *mahapadmas*[124] of terrible-looking yakshas, armed with various weapons. While going there, I saw the supreme rishi Agastya, practising terrible austerities on the banks of the Yamuna. The place was full of masses of birds and adorned with blossoming trees. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! On seeing him standing there with his arms raised and facing the sun, a mass of energy and as radiant as a blazing fire that has been kindled well, my handsome friend Maniman, the lord of the rakshasas, was overcome by stupidity, ignorance, insolence and delusion. From the sky, he spat on the maharshi's head. He[125] was angered and as though burning up the directions, said, 'O lord of riches! Because this evil-minded one has insulted me and because he has injured me while you have looked on, this friend of yours, with all these armies, will meet their deaths at the hands of a human. O one with evil intelligence! You will also grieve, together with these armies. But you will be freed from your sin when you encounter that human. However, this terrible curse will not touch the powerful sons and grandsons of these armies. Go now. They will follow your orders.' This was the curse that I had earlier received from the supreme of rishis. O great king! Your brother Bhima has freed me from that."'

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'Vaishravana said, "O Yudhishthira! Perseverance, steadfastness, place, time and valour —these are the five principles that determine results in this world. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! In krita yuga, men persevered and were skilled in their respective tasks

and were well versed in the principles of valour. O best of kshatriyas! A kshatriya who has perseverance, knows the place and the time and the principle of all dharma, rules the earth. O Partha! O brave one! A man who acts in this fashion in all his deeds, obtains fame in this world and a good end after death. Shakra, the destroyer of Vritra, together with the Vasus, exhibited his valour at the right place and time and obtained the kingdom of heaven. The one who is evil in his soul and evil in his intelligence pursues evil alone. Not knowing the results of his actions, he is destroyed now, and after death. The stupid one who does not know the time and the difference between different types of deeds, is destroyed now, and after death, and his efforts are in vain. Violent, deceitful and evil-minded ones decide to commit sin, covetous of obtaining everything. O bull among the Bharata lineage! This Bhimasena is fearless. He does not know dharma. He is prone to violence. He is childish in intelligence. He is intolerant. Therefore, instruct him.

'"When you have returned to rajarshi Arshtishena's hermitage, for the first lunar fortnight,[126] dwell there without any fear. O Indra among men! O mighty-armed one! The gandharvas, the yakshas, the rakshasas, the inhabitants of Alaka[127] and all the denizens of the mountain will protect you, and the supreme among brahmanas, on my orders. O king! O supreme among those who uphold dharma! This Vrikodara has been committing violent acts on this mountain. Restrain him. O Indra among kings! From now on, all the inhabitants of the forest will look after you, serve you and always protect you. O bull among men! My attendants will serve you with a lot of tasty food and drink. O son![128] O Yudhishthira! Just as Jishnu is under Mahendra's protection, Vrikodara under Vayu's, you under Dharma's, since you are his own son obtained through yoga, and the twins under the Ashvins, each son being respectively protected, from now on, you will be under my protection too. Phalguna, knowledgeable in all aspects of artha and well versed in all aspects of dharma, immediately younger to Bhimasena, has become skilled in heaven. O son! Right from his birth, every superior trait, perceived to lead to the attainment of the supreme of worlds, has been vested in Dhananjaya. Self-control, generosity, strength, intelligence, humility, perseverance and supreme energy—all of these are present in the great-spirited one, whose energy is infinite. O Pandava! Jishnu never commits a reprehensible act. Nor do men recount any falsehoods having been uttered by Partha. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! That extender of deeds of the Kuru lineage has been learning the art of weapons in Shakra's abode, honoured by the gods, the ancestors and the gandharvas. O Partha! The immensely energetic Shantanu, your father's grandfather, who brought all the lords of the earth under his suzerainty through dharma, is pleased in heaven with Partha Gandivadhanva.[129] That immensely valorous and greatly famous king, the upholder of his lineage, always honoured the ancestors, the gods, the rishis and the brahmanas and

performed seven major sacrifices on the banks of the Yamuna. O king! That lord of kings, your great grandfather Shantanu, has attained heaven and now resides in Shakra's world. He has asked about your welfare."'

Vaishampayana said, 'Vrikodara, bull among the Bharata lineage, then laid down his spear, his club, his sword and his bow. He bowed down in obeisance before Kubera. The lord of riches, refuge of those who seek sanctuary, then told the one who had sought shelter, "May you be the one who destroys the pride of your enemies and increases the joy of your well-wishers. O scorcher of enemies! O bulls among the Bharata lineage! Dwell in these beautiful residences. The yakshas will procure for you everything that you desire. Having obtained the weapons and having obtained leave from Maghavan himself, Gudakesha Dhananjaya, bull among men, will return soon." Having thus instructed Yudhishthira, whose deeds were virtuous, the lord of the guhyakas, returned to his home in the supreme of mountains. Thousands of rakshasas and yakshas followed him in their vehicles, covered with decorated cushions and adorned with many different kinds of gems. Those supreme horses neighed as they proceeded like birds towards Kubera's abode, following Airavata's path.[130] The steeds of the lord of riches travelled as if they were splitting the sky, trailing clouds and feeding on the wind. On the instructions of the lord of riches, the dead bodies of the rakshasas were removed from the summit of the mountain. The wise Agastya had determined this at the time for the curse. And therefore they, together with Maniman, had been slain in battle. The great-souled Pandavas happily spent the night in those residences. They were free from anxiety and were honoured by all the rakshasas.'

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Vaishampayana said, 'O destroyer of enemies! When the sun rose, having performed the rituals, Dhoumya came to the Pandavas with Arshtishena. Having bowed down at the feet of Arshtishena and Dhoumya, they worshipped all the brahmanas, hands joined in salutation.

'Then Dhoumya grasped Yudhishthira by the right hand. Looking towards the eastern direction, the maharshi said, "O great king! Mandara, the king of mountains, grandly covers the earth, right up to the frontiers of the ocean. O Pandava! This direction, adorned with mountains, forests and groves, is protected by Indra and Vaishravana. O son![131] Learned rishis, knowledgeable in dharma have said that this is the abode of Mahendra and King Vaishravana. Beings worship the sun because it rises from there, as do rishis learned in dharma, siddhas, sadhyas and gods. King Yama, with dharma in his soul and the lord of all living beings, presides over the southern direction, the path followed by those who have died. This is sacred Samyamana, extraordinary to behold. Full of great prosperity, this is the abode of the king of the dead. O king! The learned ones call this king of the mountains Asta.[132] On attaining it, the sun is established in

truth. Dwelling on this king of mountains and in the great ocean, King Varuna protects all beings. O immensely fortunate one! The great and famous Mount Meru is established in radiance in the northern direction and is the auspicious refuge of those who know the brahman. Brahma's sacrificial site[133] is there and Prajapati,[134] the soul of all beings and the creator of everything that is mobile and immobile, resides there. The great and auspicious Meru, free from disease, is also the abode of Brahma's mental sons, the seventh being Daksha.[135] O son![136] Every day, the seven devarshis, Vasishtha being the foremost, rise and set there.[137] Behold that auspicious region and the auspicious peak of Meru, where the grandfather[138] dwells with the gods, content in their souls. Beyond Brahma's abode, the supreme region of the supreme lord Narayana is resplendent. He is without beginning and without end. He is said to be the first cause of all beings. He is the true origin of all nature. Even the gods cannot see that divine and auspicious region, full of energy, without great endeavour. O king! Because of its own radiance, brighter than the sun and the fire, the region of the great-souled Vishnu is difficult for the gods and the danavas to see. When they reach there, all the stars no longer shine. The lord whose soul is never subdued, outshines them through his own brilliance. Through their devotion, combined with supreme austerities and perfected with pious deeds, accomplished in yoga and devoid of darkness and delusion, great-souled ascetics go there. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Having gone there, they never return to this world.[139] O immensely fortunate Yudhishthira! This region is eternal. It has no deterioration and no decay. This is the lord's region. Bow down before it. The illustrious Aditya,[140] the dispeller of all darkness, attracts all the stars and circumambulates it.[141] On having reached Asta and passing through evening, the sun traverses a northern course. O Pandava! Always devoted to the welfare of all beings, the sun circles Meru and reappears in the east. In a similar way, the illustrious moon divides the months into many parvasandhis and travels with the stars. Thus continuously circling the great Meru, the nourisher of all beings[142] returns to Mandara. In a similar way, the sun, the one who dispels darkness with his rays, follows the same unobstructed route and nourishes the world. When he desires to create the winter season, he takes a southern course[143] and winter descends on all beings. Then, returning, he uses his own energy to sap up the energy of all beings, mobile and immobile. Because of perspiration, tiredness, lassitude and exhaustion, all men are affected, and so are other beings. They are always inclined towards sleep. Thus, the sun traverses a path that cannot be determined. The illustrious one creates rains, reviving all beings. O Partha! Having prospered all beings, mobile and immobile, with pleasant rains, winds and warmth, the immensely energetic one resumes his course. O Partha! Thus the sun continuously traverses his course, following the wheel of time and attracting all beings.

O Pandava! His course is eternal. He never stands still. Taking energy from beings, he returns it again. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! He measures out the deeds of all beings. The eternal lord creates night and day, *kala* and *kashtha*.'"[144]

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Vaishampayana said, 'They lived on that king of mountains. Those great-souled ones established themselves in good vows. They found pleasure and amused themselves, waiting to see Arjuna. Those valorous ones were extremely pure in their souls, energetic and devoted to truth and fortitude. Masses of gandharvas and maharshis were kindly disposed towards them and came to visit them. Having reached that supreme mountain, adorned with blossoming trees, the maharathas were extremely happy in their hearts, like the Maruts are on attaining heaven. They beheld the peaks and the ridges of that great mountain, resounding with the calls of peacocks and swans and strewn with many flowers, and felt great joy. Kubera himself tended to them. They saw on that supreme mountain streams with wooded banks and ponds full of lotuses, kadambas, karandavas and swans. There were beautiful pleasure grounds, coloured and prosperous, adorned along the sides with garlands and studded with gems that please the mind, like those that are in the possession of the king of riches. The peak of that mountain had many colours and was fragrant. It had large trees and was covered with masses of clouds. Though they were always devoted to austerities, when they roamed around, they could not fathom it. O warrior among men! Because of the energy of that great mountain and the luminescence of its great herbs, no difference could be seen between night and day. While dwelling there, those brave lions among men saw the rising and the setting of the sun, the infinitely energetic sun who lived there and nourished all beings, mobile and immobile. The brave ones saw how darkness was dispelled when the sun rose and how it returned when it had set. They saw how all the directions were enveloped in the nets spread by the rays of the sun. They waited for the arrival of the maharatha who was truthful in his vows. They studied and always performed the rituals. They followed dharma and were pure in their vows. They were always established in truth. "We will soon find joy in this spot, when Dhananjaya returns, having obtained the weapons." This is what the Parthas pronounced as a supreme benediction and they devoted themselves to austerities and yoga.

'They saw many beautiful mountains and forests, but constantly thought about Kiriti.[145] Every day and every night seemed like an entire year to them. From the moment when the great-souled Jishnu had obtained Dhoumya's permission and had left with matted hair, from that instant happiness had deserted them. How could they find pleasure when their hearts were with him? They had been stricken with grief ever since Jishnu, whose gait was like that of an elephant, had followed the instructions of his brother Yudhishthira and had left Kamyaka forest. They thought of the one whose steeds

were white.[146] He had gone to Vasava in search of weapons. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! In this way, the Bharatas spent a month in that mountain, immersed in melancholy.

'Then one day, when the maharathas were thinking of Arjuna, they rejoiced when they suddenly saw Mahendra's chariot approach, like a flash of lightning, and yoked to tawny horses. It suddenly blazed in the firmament, like a giant meteor hidden in the clouds or like the flaming crest of a fire that has no smoke. It was driven by Matali.[147] Kiriti could be seen in it, garlanded and adorned in the best of ornaments. Dhananjaya was the equal of the wielder of the vajra in his power and arrived at the mountain, dazzling in his beauty. When the one with the diadem on his head arrived at the mountain, he descended from Mahendra's chariot and first paid his respect at Dhoumya's feet, followed by Ajatashatru next.[148] He then bowed down at Vrikodara's feet and was himself worshipped by Madri's sons. Then he went to Krishna and comforted her. With humility, he stood below his brother.[149] Those who were there were extremely delighted at being reunited with the one who cannot be measured. The one who had the diadem on his head was also delighted on seeing them and praised the king. With happiness in their hearts, the Parthas approached and circled Indra's chariot. On this, the slayer of Namuchi had destroyed seven groups of Diti's sons.[150] The princes of the Kuru lineage were extremely happy. They showed honour to Matali, equal to what the king of the gods would have warranted. As was appropriate, they asked him about the welfare of the gods. In turn, Matali greeted them and instructed them, like a father does his sons. In that chariot that was unmatched in its splendour, he then returned to the lord of the gods.

'When the chariot of the supreme god had departed, Shakra's great-souled son, the destroyer of all enemies, presented all the expensive and beautiful gifts that Shakra had given. The ornaments that he lovingly gave to his beloved, Sutasoma's mother,[151] glittered like the sun's rays. Then he seated himself in the midst of the bulls of the Kuru lineage, resplendent like the sun and the fire. He sat in the midst of the brahmana rishis and recounted everything that had happened. "I have learnt these weapons from Shakra, the wind-god and Shiva themselves. Together with the gods, Indra was pleased at my conduct and my concentration." Having briefly told them about his entry into heaven,[152] Kiriti, the performer of pure deeds, happily went to sleep, spending the night with Madri's sons.'

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Vaishampayana said, 'At that time,[153] there was a tremendous sound in the sky, created by all the musical instruments of the gods. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! There

was the sound of chariot wheels and the tolling of bells. The cries of beasts of prey, animals and all kinds of birds resounded everywhere. The king of the gods, the destroyer of enemies, arrived, accompanied by gandharvas and apsaras on all sides, all riding vimanas that were like the sun. Purandara, the king of the gods, blazing in his supreme radiance, went up to the Parthas in a chariot that roared like the clouds, was adorned with gold and was drawn by tawny horses. Having arrived, the god with the thousand eyes descended. As soon as he saw that great-souled one, Dharmaraja Yudhishthira, together with his brothers, approached that handsome king of the gods. The one who was generous in his gifts worshipped the one whose soul was infinite,[154] in accordance with the appropriate honours and the decreed rituals. The energetic Dhananjaya bowed in obeisance before Purandara and before the king of the gods, remained prone like a servant. The immensely energetic Yudhishthira, Kunti's son, saw Dhananjaya, his head bowed in humility. The king of the gods was extremely delighted on seeing Phalguna and inhaled the fragrance of his matted head, cleansed through austerities. The king[155] rejoiced in his heart and was overcome with delight.

'Purandara, the wise king of the gods, spoke to him. "O king! O Pandava! You will rule the earth. O Kounteya! Be fortunate. Return again to the hermitage of Kamyaka. O king! Having performed deeds that brought me pleasure, Pandava Dhananjaya has obtained all the weapons from me. No one in the worlds is capable of vanquishing him now." Having spoken these words to Kunti's son Yudhishthira, and having been worshipped by the maharshis, the one with the thousand eyes happily returned to heaven. The learned and controlled one who observes brahmacharya for a year, restrained and rigid in his vows, and studies this account of the meeting between the Pandavas and Shakra in the abode of the lord of riches, will never face obstructions and will live happily for a hundred autumns.'

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Vaishampayana said, 'When Shakra had departed the way he had come, together with his brothers and Krishna, Bibhatsu showed homage to Dharma's son. Having inhaled the fragrance of the head of Pandava Arjuna, who had bowed down before him, he[156] happily told him in a voice that was broken from delight, "O Arjuna! How did you spend this time in heaven? How did you satisfy the king of the gods and how did you obtain the weapons? O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Have you obtained all the weapons completely? Have the king of the gods and Rudra given you the weapons happily? How did you see Shakra and the illustrious wielder of the pinaka?[157] How did you obtain the weapons and how did you worship them? O destroyer of enemies! Why did the illustrious Shatakratu say that you had done that which brought him pleasure? What did you do to please him? O immensely radiant one! I wish to hear all this in detail, how

you satisfied Mahadeva and the king of the gods. O unblemished one! O destroyer of enemies! O Dhananjaya! How did you please the wielder of the vajra? Tell me everything."

'Arjuna replied, "O great king! Listen to the way in which I beheld the god Shatakratu and the illustrious lord Shankara. O king! O destroyer of enemies! Having studied as you had asked me to, I retired to the forest according to your instructions to practise austerities. From Kamyaka, I went to Bhrigutunga and practised austerities there. When I had spent a night there, I met a brahmana on the road. O Kounteya! He asked me, 'Where are you going? Tell me.' O descendant of the Kuru lineage! I then told him everything. O supreme among kings! O king! On hearing everything from me, the brahmana offered me homage and was pleased at me. He cheerfully told me, 'O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Practise austerities. You will soon behold the lord of the gods.' Then, following his instructions, I ascended Mount Shaishira[158] and practised austerities. O great king! For one month, I lived on roots and fruit. O descendant of the Pandava lineage! For the second month, I lived on water alone. And in the third, I abstained from food. In the fourth month, I stood with my arms upraised. It is extraordinary that I did not lose my strength. When the fourth had passed and the first day arrived,[159] a being in the form of a boar appeared before me. It dug the ground up with its tasks. It scratched it with its hooves. It rubbed it with its belly and continuously rolled over. It was followed by another great being in the form of a kirata.[160] He carried a bow, arrows and a sword and was accompanied by masses of women.

'"Taking up my bow and the quivers, I pierced that being,[161] which made one's hair stand up, with an arrow. At the same time, the kirata drew his powerful bow and pierced it even more firmly, as if making my mind tremble. O king! He told me, 'Why have you disregarded the rules of hunting and shot it? It was struck by me first. Stand still. I will destroy your insolence with my sharp arrows. Then that gigantic being rushed at me. While I stood like a mountain, he covered me with his great arrows. I also covered him with a mighty shower of arrows. I pierced him, like a mountain pierced by the vajra, with arrows that flamed at the tips and had feathered shafts, with mantras chanted over them. At that, he multiplied his body a hundred times and a thousand times. I pierced each of these bodies with my arrows. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! At that, all the bodies became one again. O great king! On seeing this, I pierced it again. He now assumed a very small body with a large head and then a very large body with a small head. O king! Then assuming a single body, he rushed at me to do battle. O bull among the Bharata lineage! When I could not vanquish him in combat with arrows, I resorted to my *vayavya* weapon. But it was extraordinary that I could not hurt him with this. When that weapon was repulsed, I was struck with great wonder. O great king! Therefore, I resorted to greater endeavours. In that great battle, I enveloped

him with many mighty weapons. I unleashed a shower of arrows at him—*sthunakarna, ayojala, sharavarsha, sharolbana, shailastra* and *ashmavarsha*.[162] O unblemished one! But he smilingly gobbled up all the weapons unleashed by me. When he had pacified all of them, I grasped my *brahmastra*.[163] He was then completely covered with flaming arrows. Thus covered by my great weapon, his body began to expand. Because of the energy unleashed by me, the world began to burn. In an instant, the directions and the sky began to blaze. But that immensely energetic one pacified that weapon in a moment. O king! When the brahmastra weapon was conquered, I was overcome by great fear. I grasped my bow and inexhaustible quivers and struck him with these. But he devoured those weapons too. With all the weapons repulsed and with all the weapons devoured, that being and I engaged in a wrestling bout. We dealt blows at each other with our fists and with the flats of our hands. But that being vanquished me and I fell down immobile on the ground. Then that being laughed and disappeared at that spot and time, with all the women. O great king! On seeing this, I thought that it was extraordinary.

'"O great king! Having done this, the illustrious one discarded the form of a kirata and appeared in another divine form, dressed in a wonderful garment. The illustrious god himself, with the bull on his banner,[164] yellow-eyed and capable of assuming many forms, the wielder of the pinaka,[165] could be seen in his own form, accompanied by Uma. O scorcher of enemies! After the battle, I stood there, and the wielder of the trident[166] told me, 'I am pleased with you.' Grasping the bow and the inexhaustible quivers that never run out of arrows, the illustrious one returned them to me and said, 'Ask for a boon. O Kounteya! I am satisfied with you. Tell me what I can do for you. O brave one! What is the desire of your heart? Tell me and I will grant whatever is in your heart, as long as it is not immortality.' Then, I joined my hands in salutation, with my mind set on obtaining weapons. I bowed to Sharva[167] and spoke these words, 'If the illustrious one is pleased with me, I ask for this boon. I wish to know about all the weapons that the gods possess.' The illustrious Tryambaka[168] told me, 'I will give. O Pandava! My own weapon, *roudra*, will always be present before you.' Satisfied, the lord granted me that *pashupata* weapon.[169] Having given me that eternal weapon, Mahadeva told me, 'This should never be used against humans. O Dhananjaya! This powerful weapon should only be used if you are hard-pressed. It can be used to counter all other weapons.' Because of Vrishadhvaja's favours, that divine weapon, capable of countering all other weapons, the destroyer of all enemies and capable of annihilating the armies of enemies, unassailable and impossible for gods, danavas and rakshasas to endure, stood personified by my side. After obtaining his[170] permission, I sat down there. In my very sight, the god disappeared."'

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'Arjuna said, "O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Through the favours of the great-souled Tryambaka, the god of the gods, I happily spent the night there. When the night had passed and I had completed the morning rituals, I saw the best of brahmanas whom I had met earlier. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! I told him everything that had happened and my meeting with the illustrious Mahadeva. O Indra among kings! That supreme of brahmanas then happily told me, 'You have seen Mahadeva in a way that no one else has. O unblemished one! You will see Vaivasvata[171] and all the other lords of the worlds. You will see Indra of the gods and he will give you weapons.' O king! Having said this, he embraced me again and again. Then that brahmana, who was like the sun, went where he desired.

'"O destroyer of your enemies! In the afternoon of that day, a pure breeze began to blow and it seemed to make the world new again. Near me, at the foot of Shaishira mountain, divine, fragrant and fresh flowers appeared. The sound of delightful and divine musical instruments was heard on all sides, together with chants in praise of Indra. Masses of apsaras and gandharvas began to sing various songs in front of the god of the gods. Masses of Maruts[172] arrived in celestial vehicles, together with Mahendra's followers and those who live in his abode. Marutvan, accompanied by Shachi, arrived in ornamented chariots yoked to tawny horses, together with all the other immortals. O king! At that instant, Naravahana Kubera, supreme in prosperity, appeared before me. I saw Yama established in the southern direction and Varuna and the king of the gods, each established in one's respective place. O great king! That bull among the gods then spoke to me in comforting words. 'O Savyasachi![173] Look at all of us lokapalas established here. You have seen Shankara to accomplish a task for the gods. You will receive weapons from all of us who are around here.' O lord! I then purified and prostrated myself before those best of the gods. In accordance with the prescribed rites, I received those powerful weapons.[174] O descendant of the Bharata lineage! O destroyer of enemies! Having obtained the weapons, I obtained leave of the gods. Then all the gods returned the way they had come.

'"Maghavan, lord of the gods, ascended his splendid chariot. The illustrious one, the destroyer of the enemies of the gods, smiled and spoke these words. 'O Dhananjaya! I had known you even before you arrived here. O bull among the Bharata lineage! Later, I will reveal myself to you.[175] O Pandava! You have earlier bathed in the tirthas. You have earlier tormented yourself with great austerities. You will therefore go to heaven. You will have to practise supremely terrible austerities again.' Then the illustrious one recounted all the austerities that would have to be performed. 'On my instructions, Matali will take you to the world of the thirty gods. You are already well known to the gods and the great-souled sages.' At this, I told Shakra, 'O illustrious one! Please show

your favours to me. O lord of the thirty gods! I seek you as my preceptor, so that I may learn about weapons from you.' Indra replied, 'O son! O scorcher of enemies! You will perform terrible deeds. The reason for which you wish to acquire weapons will be satisfied.' Then I said, 'O slayer of enemies! I will never use those celestial weapons against humans, except to ward off their weapons. O lord of the gods! Therefore, give me those divine weapons. O bull among the gods! I will later obtain the worlds that weapons can attain.' Indra replied, 'O Dhananjaya! I uttered those words in order to test you. Your words are worthy of someone who is my son. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! O extender of the Kuru lineage! Go to my abode and learn all the weapons there—those of Vayu, Agni, Varuna, the masses of Maruts, of the Sadhyas, the grandfather,[176] the gandharvas, the serpents and the rakshasas, those of Vishnu, the nairritas[177] and my own.' Having spoken those words to me, Shakra disappeared.

'"O king! I then saw Indra's chariot arrive. It was yoked to tawny horses. It was divine, magical and sacred and was driven by Matali. The lokapalas having left, Matali told me, 'O immensely radiant one! Shakra, the king of the gods, wishes to see you. O mighty-armed one! First attain perfection. Then perform supreme deeds. Behold the regions earned by those with pure deeds. Go to heaven in your physical body.' At Matali's words, I took my leave of Shaishira mountain. Circumambulating, I ascended that supreme chariot. Matali, expansive in generosity and an expert about horses, drove those steeds in the proper fashion, with the speed of the mind and the wind. O king! On seeing me seated steadily though the chariot was swinging, the charioteer was surprised and wonderingly said, 'Today, this seems to me to be wonderful and extraordinary. You are seated in this divine chariot, but have not moved even a foot. O bull among the Bharata lineage! When the horses make their first movements, I have noticed that even the king of the gods loses his balance. O extender of the Kuru lineage! But you are seated in this fashion, though the chariot is swinging. It seems to me that your powers have surpassed those of Shakra.' O king! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Having said this, Matali soared up into the sky and lovingly showed me Nandana and many other groves of the gods. I saw Shakra's abode of Amaravati. It was adorned with divine trees that yielded every object of desire and jewels. The sun did not light it up. No chill or heat was felt there. O king! There was no fatigue, dust, mud, darkness or old age. No sorrow, misery or pallor could be noticed there. O great king! O oppressor of enemies! There was no weariness among the inhabitants of heaven. O lord of the earth! There was no anger or greed, nor anything inauspicious. Beings in the abodes of the gods are always satisfied and happy. There are always flowers and fruit in trees that are green with foliage. There are many ponds full of lotuses and sougandhika flowers. The breeze is cool, fragrant, refreshing and pure there. There are many jewels everywhere and the ground is strewn with flowers. There are many beautiful animals and birds, with sweet voices. Many immortals can be seen, riding their vimanas. I saw the Vasus, the Rudras,

the Sadhyas, the masses of Maruts, the Adityas and the Ashvins and offered homage to all of them. They gave me their blessings for valour, fame, energy, strength, the learning of weapons and victory in battle.

'"I then entered that beautiful city, worshipped by gods and gandharvas. Hands joined in salutation, I stood before the king of the gods, the one with a thousand eyes. Shakra, supreme among generous ones, was delighted and offered me half of his throne. O one who is generous with gifts! Then Vasava honoured me and touched my body. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! For the sake of weapons and learning, I began to dwell in heaven, together with the gods and the gandharvas. O king! Vishvavasu's[178] son Chitrasena became my friend and he taught me everything that the gandharvas knew. O king! Having obtained the weapons and having been honoured, I lived there happily in Shakra's abode, getting everything that I wished for. I heard the sounds of songs and the splendid sounds of many musical instruments. O scorcher of enemies! I witnessed the dancing of the best of the apsaras. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Without ignoring those, which I learnt properly, I specially devoted my attention to learning about weapons. At that, the thousand-eyed lord was satisfied with my wishes. O king! In this way, the period of my residence in heaven passed."'

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'Arjuna said, "When I was skilled in weapons and had obtained his confidence, Harivahana[179] touched my head with his hands and spoke these words. 'Today, the masses of gods are incapable of vanquishing you in battle, not to speak of humans of the world who have not perfected their souls. You are immeasurable and unassailable. You are also incomparable in battle.' Then, with his body hair standing up, the god again said, 'O brave one! There will be no one who will be your match in fighting with weapons. You are never distracted. You are skilled. You are truthful and in control of your senses. You are like a brahmana. You are skilled in the usage of weapons. O extender of the Kuru lineage! You have obtained ten weapons and five.[180] O Partha! Know that you have no equal in all the five ways. O Dhananjaya! You know how to employ, restrain, return, pacify and counteract them.[181] You know everything about atonement and repulsion. O scorcher of enemies! The time has now come for you to pay your preceptor's fees. Promise to pay it and then I will tell you what you have to do.' O king! At that, I spoke these words to the king of the gods. 'If it is in my power to do it, then consider it done.' O king! Bala and Vritra's slayer smiled and told me, 'There is nothing in the three worlds that is impossible for you. The danavas named nivatakavachas are my enemies. They live in an inaccessible spot, along the shores of the ocean. They are thirty million in number and they are identical in form, strength and radiance. O Kounteya! Destroy them there. That will be the preceptor's fee.' He

gave me the immensely radiant and divine chariot, driven by Matali. It was yoked to horses that had hair as beautiful as the feathers of peacocks. He tied an excellent diadem on my head. He gave me ornaments for the body, similar to those he himself wore and this supreme, beautiful and impenetrable armour, pleasant to the touch. I strung Gandiva with this string that does not decay.

'"I then set out on that resplendent chariot, on which, in earlier times, the lord of the gods vanquished Bali, Virochana's son. All the gods were alerted by the roar. O lord of the earth! Thinking me to be the king of the gods, they assembled and having seen me, asked, 'O Phalguna! What will you do?' I then told them exactly what had occurred and said, 'I will do this in battle. I am departing to kill the nivatakavachas. O immensely fortunate ones! O unblemished ones! O pure ones! Give me your blessings.' They were as satisfied and pleased with me as the god Purandara. 'Ascended on this chariot, Maghavan vanquished in battle Shambara, Namuchi, Bala, Vritra, Prahlada and Naraka. On this chariot, Maghavan vanquished in battle many thousands, *prayuta*s and *arbuda*s of daityas.[182] O Kounteya! You will also vanquish the nivatakavachas in battle and show your prowess, just as the self-controlled Maghavan did earlier. Here is the supreme conch shell with which you will conquer the danavas. Using this, the great-souled Shakra conquered the worlds.'[183] The gods gave me Devadatta,[184] obtained from the waters, and I accepted it. Then, for the sake of victory, the immortals praised me. Desiring to fight, I left for the terrible abode of the danavas, with the conch shell, armour and arrows, having grasped the bow firmly."'

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'Arjuna said, "Wherever I went, I was praised by the maharshis. Then I beheld the terrible ocean, the eternal lord of the waters. Towering waves could be seen there, full of foam, dashing against each other and scattering, like moving mountains. There were thousands of boats, laden with gems, in every direction. *Timingila*s,[185] tortoises, whales and crocodiles could be seen, immersed in the water like mountains. Thousands of conch shells could be seen in every direction, immersed in the water. They looked like stars in the night, covered by thin clouds. Thousands of gems floated in heaps. A terrible wind whirled over this and it was extraordinary. I crossed over that supreme and extremely forceful storehouse of waters and drew near to the city of the daityas. I saw it, infested with danavas. Matali swiftly descended on to the ground. He drove on to the city, filling it with the roar of the chariot. On hearing the roar of the chariot, like the sound of thunder in the sky, the danavas took me to be the king of the gods and were anxious. Their minds trembled. All of them stood there, holding arrows and bows, spears, swords, battleaxes, clubs and maces in their hands. Their minds trembling with fear, the danavas closed the gates. They arranged for the protection of the city and nothing could be seen.

'"I took out the conch shell Devadatta, whose sound is great. Circling around the city

of the asuras, I blew gently on it. That sound echoed everywhere and seemed to stupefy the sky. On hearing this, the immensely mighty beings trembled and hid themselves. Then all the nivatakavachas, Diti's sons, appeared everywhere. They were clad in different kinds of armour and had many different weapons in their hands. There were gigantic iron lances, clubs, maces, spears and the wheels of chariots in their hands. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! There were *shataghnis*,[186] catapults and brilliantly ornamented swords. O bull among the Bharata lineage! Then, thinking about the route the chariot should take, Matali drove the horses along level ground. Because of the swift speed that he made the horses adopt, I could see nothing and it seemed to me to be extraordinary. Then the many martial danavas adopted distorted voices and shapes. That great sound made hundreds and thousands of fishes die, suddenly floating up in the sky, like mountains. With great force, the danavas rushed towards me. They discharged hundreds and thousands of sharp arrows. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! For the sake of the death of the nivatakavachas, a great and terrible fight occurred between them and me. Devarshis, masses of rishis among the danavas, brahmarshis and siddhas assembled to witness that great battle. Hoping for victory, the hermits praised me with eloquent and sweet voices, just as they praised Indra at the time of *tarakamaya*."'[187]

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'Arjuna said, "O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Grasping weapons in order to do battle, all the nivatakavachas rushed towards me. With angry yells, those maharathas obstructed the path of my chariot. They surrounded me from all directions and enveloped me with a shower of arrows. Other immensely valorous ones grasped lances and spears in their hands. They used lances and catapults on me. A great shower of lances, clubs and javelins was continuously hurled and descended on my chariot. Other nivatakavachas rushed at me in battle. They were armed with sharp weapons and missiles. They were terrible and skilled in fighting, like death. I sliced them down in battle with many swift and straight arrows released from Gandiva and pierced each of them with ten.[188] Those arrows used by me, sharpened on stone, drove all of them back. Those horses were swiftly driven by Matali and as fleet as the wind, performed many manoeuvres of the chariot. The skilled Matali trampled many of Diti's sons. Hundreds and hundreds of tawny horses were yoked to that great chariot. But in Matali's hands, there seemed to be only a few. Through the hooves, the terrible noise of the chariot and my bows, hundreds of asuras were slain. Others, grasping their bows even when they were dead, and with their charioteers killed, were carried away on horses. Those who were skilled in fighting covered all the directions. With all these weapons, my mind was distressed.

'"But Matali's valour seemed supremely extraordinary to me. He guided the swift horses lightly. O king! With light hands, I cut down hundreds and thousands of asuras in

that battle, together with their weapons. O slayer of enemies! The brave Matali, Shakra's charioteer, was pleased when I roamed around in these endeavours. Some were crushed by the horses, others by the chariot. Some died. Others gave up fighting. In that battle, other nivatakavachas challenged me and attacked me from all sides with great showers of arrows. With light arrows that had been invoked with the brahmastra weapon, I consumed them in hundreds and thousands. Those angry and gigantic asuras were oppressed by me. They oppressed me with a shower of arrows, spears and swords. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! I then picked up the beloved weapon of the king of the gods, named *madhava*. It possessed supreme energy. Through the energy of that weapon, I sliced into a hundred pieces the swords, tridents and javelins that they hurled at me in their thousands. Having angrily sliced their weapons, I pierced each of them with ten arrows. The great arrows that were unleashed from Gandiva in that battle were like swarms of bees and Matali praised them. They also covered me with many arrows, as innumerable as locusts. But I powerfully repulsed them with my arrows. Being struck, the nivatakavachas again surrounded me from all directions, with a great shower of arrows. But I repulsed them with thousands of flaming, supreme and swift arrows that were capable of countering arrows. Like water draining from the peak of a mountain during the rainy season, blood began to flow from their mangled bodies. Pierced by the swift and straight-travelling arrows, with an impact like that of Indra's vajra, the danavas became extremely anxious. Their bodies were cut into a hundred pieces. Their weapons lost their energy. The nivatakavachas then began to fight me with the powers of maya."'[189]

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'Arjuna said, "Then a mighty shower of rocks appeared in all the directions. Those terrible rocks, as large as mountain, oppressed me grievously. But in that battle, with swift arrows that were like the vajra and were discharged from Indra's weapon, I shattered them into a hundred splinters. When the rocks were shattered, there was a fire and those splintered rocks fell into it like sparks. When that shower of rocks was dissipated, there was a great shower of water. It poured down on me in flows that were as large as axles.[190] The shower descending from the sky, in thousands of powerful streams, enveloped the sky and the directions everywhere. Nothing could be seen because of the downpour of water, the roar of the wind and the roars of the daityas. The water covered everything between heaven and earth. Descending continuously on earth, that torrent confounded me. At that, I discharged the terrible, flaming and divine weapon named *vishoshana*,[191] obtained from Indra, and this dried the water up. O one who is deserving of honour! When the shower of rocks was destroyed by me and the shower of water dried up, the danavas used maya to unleash wind and fire. I destroyed

all the fire with a weapon named *salila*.[192] I countered the force of the wind through a great weapon named *shaila*.[193] O descendant of the Bharata lineage! When that had been countered, the danavas, indomitable in battle, resorted to many types of maya and yoga. There was a great shower that made one's body hair stand up, consisting of terrible weapons, fire, wind and rocks. That shower, created through maya, oppressed me in battle. A terrible darkness then manifested itself in every direction.

'"When the world was completely immersed in that terrible and dense darkness, the horses drew back and Matali tumbled forward. The golden whip fell down from his hand, onto the ground. O bull among the Bharata lineage! He repeatedly cried out, 'Where are you?' When he had lost his senses in this way, a terrible fear overcame me. Trembling and bereft of his senses, he told me, 'O Partha! O unblemished one! In earlier times, there was a terrible war between the gods and the demons for the sake of amrita. I witnessed it. There was a terrible and great battle for the slaying of Shambara[194] and I was the charioteer of the king of the gods then too. Like that, I drove the steeds at the killing of Vritra. I also witnessed the terrible and great battle for Virochana's son.[195] O Pandava! I have seen those terrible and great battles. But never before have I lost my senses. It must certainly have been determined by the grandfather[196] that all beings will be destroyed. But for the destruction of the universe, I can find no other reason for this battle.' On hearing these words of his, and pacifying myself in my own mind, I got ready to confound this great strength of maya of the danavas.

'"I told the terrified Matali, 'Behold the strength of my arms, the might of my weapons and those of this bow Gandiva. O charioteer! Do not be scared. Be steady. With the maya of my weapons, I will now counter this terrible maya and repulse this terrible darkness.' O lord of men! Having said this, I unleashed the maya of my weapons for the welfare of the thirty gods, capable of deluding all beings. That maya having been dispelled, the lords of the asuras, infinitely energetic, again unleashed many different types of maya. It was suddenly light. Suddenly everything was immersed in darkness. The world could sometimes not be seen. Sometimes it was immersed in the water. When it was light, in that battle which made one's body hair stand up, Matali drove the chariot, yoked to horses that were handled well. Then the terrible nivatakavachas rushed towards me. Whenever I saw an opening, I sent them to Yama's abode. In that battle, for the destruction of the nivatakavachas, suddenly I could not see any of the danavas. They had covered themselves with maya."'

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'Arjuna said, "Invisible, the daityas fought me with maya. With the power of invisible weapons, I continued to fight with them. The shafted arrows from Gandiva, empowered with mantras, sliced off their heads, wherever they were. At that, thus killed by me in

battle, the nivatakavachas suddenly withdrew their maya and retreated into their city again. The daityas having fled and everything visible again, I saw the dead danavas there, in hundreds and thousands. There were shattered weapons and ornaments. Heaps of dead bodies and armour could be seen. There was no room for the horses to move their feet. They[197] suddenly rose up and took to the sky. Invisible, the nivatakavachas covered the entire sky and showered down large rocks. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Other terrible danavas entered the interiors of the earth and restrained the feet of the horses and the wheels of the chariot. While engaged in the fight, they seized the tawny horses and the chariot and covered me, ascended on the chariot, in every direction with rocks. Because of the rocks that covered me, and because of the others that kept falling, the entire region where we were stationed looked like a cave. I was sorely oppressed, being enveloped with rocks. The horses had been restrained. On noticing that I was scared, Matali said, 'O Arjuna! O Arjuna! Do not be frightened. Discharge the vajra weapon.' O lord of men! On hearing these words of his, I unleashed the vajra weapon, the vajra that is loved by the king of the gods. I resorted to an immobile spot and invoked Gandiva with the mantra. I discharged sharp iron arrows that had the force of the vajra. Having been discharged from the vajra, those arrows became like the vajra themselves. They penetrated all the maya of the nivatakavachas. Struck by the vajras, those danavas clung to one another and fell down on the ground, like mountains. The arrows hunted out the danavas who had entered the interiors of the earth and had seized the horses and the chariot, and dispatched them to Yama's abode. That place was littered with the corpses of mountainous nivatakavachas, as if strewn with mountains. It was extraordinary that the horses, the chariot, Matali or I did not suffer any injury.

'"O king! Matali smiled and told me, 'O Arjuna! The valour exhibited by you is not seen even among the gods.' With masses of asuras having been slain, their wives began to lament in the city, like cranes during the autumn. Accompanied by Matali, I entered the city, terrifying the nivatakavacha women with the roar of the chariot. On seeing the tens of thousands of horses, like peacocks, and the chariot that blazed like the sun, masses of women began to flee. The sounds that those terrified women made with their ornaments was like that of hail descending on a mountain. The frightened daitya women entered their houses, made of gold and decorated with many beautiful gems. On seeing that supreme and wonderful city, superior to the city of the gods, I asked Matali, 'Why do the gods not live in this wonderful place? I think that it surpasses Purandara's city.' Matali replied, 'O Partha! This was earlier the city of the gods. But the gods were expelled from here by the nivatakavachas. They obtained the grandfather's favours through great and terrible austerities and obtained the boon that they should live here, free from all fear of the gods in battle. Then Shakra resorted to the illustrious one who creates himself[198] and said, "O illustrious one! Bearing our welfare in mind, you decide

what is appropriate in this case." The illustrious one told Vasava what had been destined in this matter. "O slayer of Vritra! You yourself will assume another body and kill them."[199] Therefore, Shakra gave you weapons for their destruction. Even the gods could not kill the ones you have now slain. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! You arrived here when the time was right for their end and you have accomplished the task. O Indra among men! Mahendra conferred on you the supreme power of those supreme weapons for the destruction of the danavas.' Having killed the danavas and entering their city, I returned to the abode of the gods, together with Matali."'

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'Arjuna said, "While I was returning, I saw another great city. It was divine, as resplendent as the fire and the sun, and it could roam as it wished. It had trees that were covered with jewels, with colourful birds that had sweet voices. It was inhabited by Poulamas and Kalakeyas who were always happy.[200] It was impregnable, with turrets, entrances and four gates. It was covered with jewels everywhere and was celestial and wonderful to see. There were trees with flowers and fruit, covered everywhere with divine gems. There were extremely beautiful celestial birds. It was filled everywhere with asuras who were always happy, armed with weapons like spears, swords, clubs, bows and maces in their hands. O king! On seeing this extraordinary city of the daityas, I asked Matali, 'What is this that I see here?'

'"Matali replied, 'There was once a daitya lady named Puloma and another great asura lady named Kalaka. They observed supreme austerities for one thousand celestial years. When they had completed the austerities, the one who created himself[201] granted them a boon. O Indra among kings! They chose the boon that their sons should not suffer much and should be incapable of being killed by the gods, the rakshasas and the serpents. This beautiful city that roams in the sky is the result of those good deeds. It is full of jewels everywhere and is incapable of being conquered even by the gods, the yakshas, the masses of gandharvas, the serpents, the asuras and the rakshasas. It contains all the objects of desire and qualities and is devoid of sorrow and disease. O best of the Bharata lineage! This was created for the Kalakeyas by Brahma. This is the divine city that is roaming around in the sky, avoided by the immortals. O brave one! It is inhabited by the Poulama and Kalakeya danavas. This great city is known by the name of Hiranyapura.[202] It is protected by the great Kalakeya and Poulama asuras. They are always happy there and cannot be killed by all the gods. O Indra among kings! They always live here happily, devoid of anxiety and with nothing left to ask for. It was earlier destined by Brahma that they would die at the hands of a human.'"

'Arjuna said, "O lord! Having learnt that they could not be slain by the gods and the asuras, I happily told Matali, 'Go swiftly to that city. I will use my weapons to destroy

those who hate the thirty gods. There are no evil haters of the gods who do not deserve to be slain by me.' In that divine chariot, yoked to tawny horses, Matali swiftly conveyed me to the city of Hiranyapura. On seeing me, Diti's sons, adorned in colourful garments and ornaments, mounted their chariots and hastened at great speed. The chiefs of the danavas, terrible in valour, angrily attacked me with darts,[203] iron arrows, missiles,[204] spears, cudgels and clubs. I warded off this great shower of weapons. O king! Resorting to the strength of my knowledge, I unleashed a great shower of arrows. In that battle, I confounded all of them through the course of my chariot. Completely confounded, the danavas fell down on one another. They were so confounded that they rushed at each other. I sliced off their heads with hundreds of blazing arrows. Thus slaughtered by me, the daityas resorted to their city again. Using the power of maya that danavas possess, they rose up into the sky with their city. I restrained them with a great shower of arrows. I blocked the path of the daityas and restrained their movement. But the daityas were supported by their boon. With ease, that celestial city, divine in radiance and capable of going anywhere at will, remained suspended in the sky. It would suddenly plunge into the ground, then be established up in the sky again. It would swiftly adopt a diagonal movement and immerse itself in the waters. O lord of men! That giant city, capable of going anywhere at will, was like Amaravati. I attacked it with many types of weapons. O bull among the Bharata lineage! Then I subdued the daityas, together with the city, with a net of arrows invoked with divine weapons. O king! It was wounded through the straight and iron arrows shot by me. The city of the asuras was destroyed and fell down on the ground. O king! Pierced by my iron arrows, as swift as the vajra, and driven by destiny, the asuras roamed around. Matali swiftly descended on the ground in that chariot, as radiant as the sun, as if taking a forward leap. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Wishing to fight with me, those indomitable ones surrounded me with sixty thousand chariots. But I destroyed them with sharp arrows that had feathers of vultures as plumes. Thus vanquished in battle, they retreated like the waves of the ocean. Thinking that no man was capable of defeating them in battle, I discharged all my other weapons, one after the other.[205] But slowly, my divine weapons, and the thousands of chariots of those skilled warriors, neutralized each other. The maharathas roamed around, in different manoeuvres of their chariots. They could be seen in hundreds and thousands. They were adorned in colourful crowns and garlands for the head and dazzling armour and flags. With many beautiful ornaments, they delighted my mind.

'"In that battle, with all my showers of arrows, I was not able to oppress them. But they oppressed me. Thus hard-pressed by many who were accomplished in weapons and were skilled warriors, I felt pain in that great battle. A great fear took hold of me. In the battle, I bowed down to Rudra, god of the gods. Saying, 'May there be welfare to all beings,' I used the great weapon famous by the name of roudra, capable of destroying

all enemies. I then saw a man with three heads, nine eyes, three faces and six arms, with hair blazing like the sun and the fire.[206] O scorcher of enemies! There were giant serpents with flaming tongues on his head. O bull among the Bharata lineage! On beholding that terrible and eternal roudra weapon, I lost my fear and attached it to Gandiva. I bowed in obeisance to the three-eyed and infinitely energetic Sharva.[207] O descendant of the Bharata lineage! I discharged it, to defeat the lords of the danavas. O lord of the earth! As soon as I discharged it, it assumed thousands of different forms everywhere—deer, lions, tigers, bears, buffaloes, serpents, cattle, elephants, marsh-deer, sharabhas, bulls, boars, cats, hyenas, ghosts, *bhurunda*s,[208] vultures, garudas, sharks,[209] pishachas, yakshas, haters of gods, guhyakas, nairritas, large fish with mouths like elephants, owls and masses of fish and tortoises, all brandishing many kinds of weapons and swords. There were yatudhanas,[210] wielding clubs and maces. There were many other beings in different forms. They filled up the universe when that weapon was discharged. Those many different forms—with three heads, four tusks, four faces and four arms—devoured the flesh, fat and marrow of the danavas. They continuously killed the ones who had gathered there. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! In an instant, I also killed the danavas with arrows that were destructive of enemies, as hard as the vajra and as radiant as lightning, blazing like the sun and the fire.

'"On seeing them destroyed through weapons shot from Gandiva, deprived of life and hurled down from the sky, I once again bowed to the god who destroyed Tripura.[211] On seeing that they had been destroyed, with all their celestial ornaments, shattered by the roudra weapon, the charioteer of the gods was extremely delighted. On seeing that I had performed a task that was impossible even for the gods, Matali, Shakra's charioteer, worshipped me. He joined his hands in salutation and said in a happy voice, 'The task that you have accomplished was impossible for the gods and the asuras. Even the lord of the gods could not have achieved this in battle. This great city that roamed around in the sky could not have been destroyed by the gods and the asuras. O brave one! You have vanquished it through the strength of your own valour, weapons and austerities.' When the city had been destroyed and the danavas killed, all the lamenting women emerged from the city. They were smitten by grief, their hair was dishevelled and they were miserable like ospreys. They threw themselves down on the ground, sorrowing over their sons, fathers and husbands. In miserable tones, they loudly grieved over their dead lords. They beat their breasts with their hands and the garlands and ornaments were thrown away. The city of the danavas was overcome with sorrow, misery and distress. It had lost all its splendour and all its lords had been slain. It was no longer radiant. Like a city of the gandharvas, like a pond deserted by elephants and like a forest that is full of dry trees, that city disappeared.

'"With a happy mind, Matali quickly took me from the field of battle to the abode of the king of the gods. I had accomplished my task. I had destroyed Hiranyapura and killed the great asuras and the nivatakavachas. I returned to Shakra. O immensely radiant one! Matali recounted my deeds in detail to the Indra of the gods, completely and exactly as it had happened—the destruction of Hiranyapura, the use of maya, the way it was repulsed and the slaying of the immensely powerful nivatakavachas in battle. On hearing this, the illustrious Purandara, the one with the thousand eyes, was delighted. In the midst of the Maruts, he spoke words like, 'Wonderful' and 'Well done'. Together with the other gods, the king of the gods repeatedly congratulated me and spoke these gentle words. 'In battle, you have accomplished a deed that was impossible for the gods and the asuras. O Partha! By slaying my enemies, you have paid a great preceptor's fee. O Dhananjaya! You will always remain as steady in battle. You will know what has to be done and will not be confounded in using these weapons. The gods, the danavas, the rakshasas, the yakshas, the asuras and the gandharvas, together with masses of birds and serpents, will not be able to withstand you in battle. O Kounteya! Through the strength of your arms, Kunti's son, Yudhishthira, with dharma in his soul, will conquer the earth and protect it.'"'

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'Arjuna said, "At some point, on seeing that I had recovered from the wounds of the arrows and was comfortable, the king of the gods told me, 'O descendant of the Bharata lineage! All the divine weapons are yours now. There is no man on earth who is capable of vanquishing you. O son! When you are engaged in the field of battle, Bhishma, Drona, Kripa, Karna and Shakuni, together with all the other kings, are not worth one-sixteenth of you.'[212] The lord Maghavan then gave me this divine and impenetrable armour and a golden garland. He also gave me the conch shell Devadatta, which emits a great sound. Indra himself fixed this celestial diadem on my head. Shakra then gave me these divine garments and celestial ornaments, beautiful and many in number. O king! Thus honoured, I lived happily in Indra's abode, together with the children of the gandharvas. Extremely pleased with me, Shakra, together with the immortals, told me, 'O Arjuna! The time for your departure has come. Your brothers are remembering you.' O descendant of the Bharata lineage! O king! Thus did I spend five years in Indra's abode, remembering the discord that was brought on us because of the gambling. Then, when you came to Mount Gandhamadana, I saw you on the peak, surrounded by your brothers."

'Yudhishthira replied, "O descendant of the Bharata lineage! O Dhananjaya! You have obtained those weapons through good fortune. It is also through good fortune that you satisfied the king and the lord who is the king of the gods. O scorcher of enemies! O unblemished one! It is through good fortune that you beheld the lord Sthanu himself,

together with the goddess, and satisfied him in the duel.[213] O bull among the Bharata lineage! It is through good fortune that you managed to meet the lokapalas. It is through good fortune that all of us have prospered and have set our eyes on you again. I now think that we have conquered the goddess earth, with her garland of cities, and have vanquished the sons of Dhritarashtra. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! But I wish to see those divine weapons with which you killed the valorous nivatakavachas."

'Arjuna said, "When it is dawn tomorrow, you will see all those divine weapons with which I destroyed the terrible nivatakavachas."'

Vaishampayana said, 'Having thus recounted the incidents connected with his return, Dhananjaya spent the night there, together with his brothers.'

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Vaishampayana said, 'When the night had passed, Dharmaraja Yudhishthira awoke and performed the necessary rituals, together with his brothers. Then he told Arjuna, the beloved of his brothers. "O Kounteya! Show us the weapons with which you destroyed the danavas." O king! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Then the immensely energetic Pandava Dhananjaya showed the celestial weapons that had been given by the gods, in due order, and after establishing himself in supreme purity. The earth was like his chariot and the radiant Dhananjaya seated himself on that. The trees on the mountain were like its axles and the beautiful bamboos like the spokes. He looked resplendent in his bright armour. He grasped the bow Gandiva and the conch shell Devadatta, born from the waters. In that radiance, mighty-armed Kounteya prepared to show those divine weapons, one after the other.

'As he got ready to employ those divine weapons, the earth and all its trees began to tremble under his feet. The rivers and the great ocean began to tremble. The mountains were rent asunder. The winds stopped blowing. The one with the thousand rays[214] stopped shining. The fires stopped burning. The Vedas were no longer manifest to those who were twice-born.[215] O Janamejaya! The beings that lived in the interiors of the earth were oppressed. All of them trembled and emerged. Covering their faces, they joined their hands in salutation and surrounded Pandava. Burnt by those weapons, they prayed to Dhananjaya. The brahmarshis, the siddhas, the maharshis and all mobile beings stood there. So did supreme rajarshis, gods, yakshas, rakshasas, gandharvas and birds. The grandfather[216] himself arrived, together with all the lokapalas, and the illustrious Mahadeva, with all his companions. O great king! Vayu covered Pandava with colourful, fragrant and divine flowers from every side. Instructed by the gods, the gandharvas sung many songs. O king! Masses of apsaras began to dance there. At that tumultuous time, instructed by the gods, Narada arrived. O king! He spoke these words, worthy of hearing, to Partha. "O Arjuna! O Arjuna! O descendant of the Bharata

lineage! Do not discharge these divine weapons. They should never be used when there is no target. Even when there is a target, one should not use them unless one is hard-pressed. O descendant of the Kuru lineage! Such a use of these weapons is a great sin. O Dhananjaya! If these weapons are properly preserved, as you have been taught, there is no doubt that they will lead to great happiness. O Pandava! But if they are not preserved well, they will lead to the destruction of the three worlds. Therefore, never attempt this again. O Ajatashatru![217] You will behold the weapons when Partha uses them in battle for the destruction of the enemies." O bull among men! After having restrained Partha, all the gods, and all the others who had assembled there, departed the way they had come. O Kouravya![218] When they had left, the Pandavas, together with Krishna, began to live happily in that forest.'

Section Thirty-Six

Ajagara Parva

This parva has 201 shlokas and six chapters.

Chapter 470(173): 22 shlokas
Chapter 471(174): 24 shlokas
Chapter 472(175): 21 shlokas
Chapter 473(176): 51 shlokas
Chapter 474(177): 33 shlokas
Chapter 475(178): 50 shlokas

Ajagara *means a boa constrictor, literally something that swallows a goat* (aja). *The Pandavas retrace their steps to Vrishaparva's hermitage and Badari and then go to visit King Subahu. From there, they go to the origins of the Yamuna and Dvaitavana, on the banks of the Sarasvati. Bhima is then grasped by Nahusha in the form of a boa and this is why this section is called Ajagara Parva. The highlight of this section is a dialogue between Yudhishthira and Nahusha, in the form of a boa.*

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Janamejaya asked, 'When that great charioteer, skilled in weapons, returned from the abode of Vritra's slayer, what did the Parthas accomplish next, now that they had been rejoined by the brave Dhananjaya?'

Vaishampayana said, 'Those Indras among men lived in that forest. The brave ones sported there on that beautiful mountain, the lovely pleasure ground of the lord of riches, with Arjuna, equal to Indra himself. On seeing those unmatched houses and pleasure grounds covered with many trees, Kiriti,[1] Indra among men, always immersed in his weapons and with the bow in his hand, roamed around a lot. Through the favours of King Vaishravana, those sons of a king had found an abode and no longer desired what beings want.[2] That time was a blessing for them. They were united with Partha and lived for four years there and these years they spent there seemed like a single night. With the earlier six, it was now ten years that the Pandavas had peacefully dwelt in the forest.

'Once, Vayu's intrepid son was seated near the king, together with Jishnu and the twins, the equals of the king of the gods.[3] In private, he gently spoke these beneficial words. "O king of the Kurus! In order to ensure that your oath remained true and to do that which would make you happy, we followed you into the forest and did not kill Suyodhana, together with his followers. We have lived here for eleven years. We are deserving of happiness, but Suyodhana has grasped that happiness. We should now deceive that scoundrel, lacking in intelligence and conduct. Let us happily resort to a

life that will be incognito.[4] O king! On your instructions, we lived without anxiety and spent this time roaming in the forest. He will be deluded because we have lived nearby and will not get to know if we move to a distant region. Having spent one year in hiding, we will easily uproot that worst of men. O Indra among kings! On that scoundrel among men, Suyodhana, surrounded by all his followers, we will reap the enmity, with all its fruits and flowers. O Dharmaraja! Accept the world as your own. O god among men! Kill this grief. We are capable of roaming this mountain that is like heaven. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Your fragrant deeds may be destroyed in this world of the mobile and the immobile. But by regaining the kingdom of the bulls among the Kurus, you are capable of performing great deeds and great rituals. O Indra among men! You are always capable of obtaining whatever you want from Kubera. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Set your heart on the slaying of those who hate you and on punishing them, because they have oppressed you. O king! The wielder of the vajra is himself incapable of withstanding your terrible energy. O Dharmaraja! Nor will any pain be caused to you even if you confront all the gods. The one with Suparna on his banner and Shini's grandson are both engaged in that which ensures your welfare.[5] O god among kings! The foremost among the Shinis, the equal of Krishna in strength, is engaged likewise.[6] Krishna, together with the Yadavas, is engaged in that which will ensure your welfare. O god among men! So are these brave and skilled twins. Our prime objective is an increase in your influence. Encountering the enemies, we will pacify them." On ascertaining what was in their mind, the great-souled son of Dharma circumambulated Vaishravana's abode.[7]

'The energetic one was knowledgeable about dharma and artha. Dharmaraja bid adieu to the houses, the rivers, the lakes and all the rakshasas. He glanced down at the path through which he had ascended and looked again at the mountain and said, "O Indra among mountains! When my deeds are done, when my well-wishers and I have triumphed over the enemies and have won the kingdom, I will behold you again, for performing austerities with a restrained soul." Surrounded by all his brothers and the brahmanas, the lord of the Kurus was again carried along a similar path, with all the others, by Ghatotkacha—over mountains and waterfalls. On seeing them ready to leave, the maharshi[8] cheerfully instructed them, like a father to his sons. Together with Lomasha, they happily went to the sacred abode of the dwellers of heaven. Similarly instructed by Arshtishena, the Parthas, foremost among men, went and saw the beautiful tirthas, hermitages and many other great ponds.'

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Vaishampayana said, 'That supreme of mountains had cascading waterfalls and was full

of kinnaras, birds and cardinal elephants.[9] The bulls among the Bharatas had lived happily there and found no pleasure in leaving it. But when the bulls among the Bharatas once again beheld Kailasa, Kubera's beloved mountain that looked like an ocean of clouds, they found great joy. The brave ones saw passes in the mountains, pens for cattle in the mountains, crevasses in the mountains and many sharp falls, with plains and lowlands here and there. There were other large forests, inhabited by many animals and deer. Armed with bows and swords, those foremost among men confidently went further. There were beautiful groves, rivers and ponds and caverns and recesses in the mighty mountains. By day and by night, those bulls among men always found places to rest there. After resting in this difficult terrain and traversing Kailasa, whose form is unthinkable, they reached Vrishaparva's supreme and beautiful hermitage. On meeting them, King Vrishaparva heartily welcomed them. Overcoming all confusion, they gave Vrishaparva a complete account of their safe stay.[10] They happily spent a night in that sacred hermitage, favoured by gods and maharshis. The brave ones then went to the giant Badari and happily dwelt there again. Then those great-souled ones, foremost among men, arrived at Narayana's region. They saw Kubera's lotus pond, favoured by gods and siddhas, and became devoid of grief. Pandu's sons, foremost among all men, saw those lotuses and became devoid of grief. They pleasured there, just as brahmana rishis enjoy themselves when they live in Nandana.

'Having spent a happy month in Badari, in due course, they went to the land of Subahu, the king of the kiratas, following the route that other brave ones had traversed earlier. They passed the lands of *chinas*,[11] *tukharas*,[12] *daradas*,[13] *darvas*[14] and *kunindas*[15] full of many jewels. The brave ones crossed the difficult terrain of the Himalaya region and saw Subahu's city. When he heard that all the sons and grandsons of kings had arrived, King Subahu was delighted and came out to welcome them. The bulls of the Kuru lineage greeted him in return. They met Subahu with all the charioteers headed by Vishoka, with Indrasena, with the servants, with the cooks and with their supervisors.[16] They stayed there happily for a night. Retaining all the charioteers and the chariots, they dismissed Ghatotkacha and his followers. They continued towards Yamuna, the king of mountains.[17] That mountain is full of springs. Its red and pale slopes are covered with a mantle of snow. The foremost among men reached the sacrificial pole Vishakha and lived there.[18] The great forest was like Chaitraratha[19] and was infested by boars, many animals and birds. Those foremost among hunters safely spent another year in that forest. In a cavern in that mountain, Vrikodara came upon an extremely strong serpent. It was oppressed by hunger and had the terrible form of death itself. Thereupon, his soul was pained through depression and delusion. But Yudhishthira, supreme among those who uphold dharma and whose energy is infinite, freed Vrikodara in an island there, when all his limbs had been grasped by the

grasper.[20] The twelfth year had arrived and the Kurus pleasantly spent the time in the forest. They lived in the forest that was like Chaitraratha. They were fortunate and radiant in their austerities. Then the foremost ones among those who are devoted to the knowledge of arms, went to the neighbourhood of the desert. They went to Sarasvati and found Lake Dvaitavana, wishing to live there. On seeing them come to Dvaitavana and settling down there, the residents of that region arrived. They were engaged in austerities and restrained, devoted to rituals and meditation. They came with grass, water, vessels, offerings and stones for grinding. Sarasvati's banks were covered with many plakshas,[21] *akshas*,[22] *rohitakas*,[23] cane, *snuhas*,[24] badaris,[25] *khadiras*,[26] *shirishas*,[27] bilvas,[28] ingudas,[29] *pilus*,[30] shamis[31] and *kariras*.[32] This was a place loved by yakshas, gandharvas and maharshis. It was the sacrificial ground of the gods themselves. Those sons of a god among men lived there happily, roaming delightedly along the banks of the Sarasvati.'

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Janemejaya asked, 'O sage! How can Bhima, whose prowess is terrible and who has the strength of ten thousand elephants, have been overcome by dreadful fear on account of an ajagara? The insolent one challenged the lord of riches, of the Pulastya lineage, in battle.[33] He encountered and killed the foremost among yakshas and rakshasas at the lotus pond. You said that the destroyer of enemies was overcome by distress and fear. I am curious and wish to hear this in detail.'

Vaishampayana said, 'O king! Having left the hermitage of King Vrishaparva, those foremost among archers lived in the forest that possessed many wonders. On seeing that beautiful forest, frequented by gods and gandharvas, Vrikodara began to roam around as he wished, bow and sword in his hands. He saw the pure regions on the Himalaya mountains, visited by masses of apsaras and frequented by gods, rishis and siddhas. It resounded everywhere with the sounds of chakoras, chakravaka birds, jivas,[34] jivakas,[35] cuckoos and *bhringarajas*.[36] It was covered with trees that were always full of flowers and fruit, tender because of the touch of snow. There was plenty of shade and it was pleasant to the mind and the eye. He saw mountainous streams tinged with the colour of lapis lazuli. The water was touched by snow and there were tens of thousands of geese and karandavas.[37] There were forests of devadaru trees[38] that seemed to act like a net for the clouds. These were mixed with yellow sandalwood and tall *kaliyakas*.[39] He went hunting on the flat terrain of the desert. The immensely strong one shot the deer with arrows that were pure.[40]

'Then he saw a gigantic serpent that makes one's body hair stand up. It had entered a mountainous cavern and had covered the entire cave with its body. Its coils were piled

as high as a mountain. Its colour was yellow like turmeric and its colourful skin was speckled with circular marks like the sun and the moon. Its mouth was as wide as a cave and was adorned with four teeth. It constantly licked the corners of its mouth. Its eyes blazed and were copper-red in hue. Like destiny and like Yama, it struck terror in all beings. Through the moist hissing of its breath, it seemed to be reprimanding. The hungry boa suddenly grasped Bhimasena and forcefully seized him with both his arms. Because of the boon it had received, Bhimasena instantly lost his senses as soon as it touched him. The strength of Bhimasena's arms might have been more than that of others and his strength might have been able to withstand ten thousand elephants. But the energetic one was completely overcome by the serpent. Bhima trembled slowly, but he was completely unable to move. He was equal to ten thousand elephants. He had the shoulders of a lion. His arms were strong. But grasped, he lost his mettle. He was deluded because of the grant of the boon. For some time, the brave one tried terribly hard to extricate himself. But he did not succeed at all.'

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Vaishampayana said, 'The energetic Bhimasena was thus overcome by the serpent. He began to think about the great and extraordinary valour of the serpent. He told the great serpent, "O serpent! If you so desire, please tell me. O best of serpents! Who are you and what will you do with me? I am Pandava Bhimasena, immediately younger to Dharmaraja. I possess the vigour equal to that of ten thousand elephants. How can I have been brought under your power? Many lions with manes, tigers, buffaloes and elephants have been encountered and slain by me in battle. O supreme among serpents! Danavas, pishachas and immensely strong rakshasas have not been able to withstand the force of my arms. Do you have the strength of knowledge or do you have the gift of a boon? In spite of my endeavours, you have been able to overpower me. O serpent! It is certain in my mind that the valour of men is useless, since you have been able to withstand my great strength." When the brave Bhima, whose deeds are unsullied, was speaking in this way, the serpent encircled him in one gigantic coil.

'Having thus overcome the mighty-armed one, but freeing his thick arms, the serpent said, "O mighty-armed one! I have been hungry for an extremely long time and it is fortunate that the gods and destiny have sent me my food. Life is dear to all beings that have bodies. O destroyer of enemies! O virtuous one! But I must certainly tell you the account now, how it was that I became a serpent. I attained this state because of the anger of the learned ones. Wishing to overcome the curse, I will tell you the serpent's account. You must have heard of the rajarshi named Nahusha. He was your ancestor and that of your forefathers. He was Ayu's son and the extender of that lineage. I am he. Because of the disrespect shown to brahmanas and because of Agastya's curse, I have attained this state.[41] Look at what fate has wrought on me. You are my descendant and

you are extremely handsome. Therefore, you should not be killed by me. But look at destiny. I will devour you today. O supreme among men! Once I have grasped a prey on the sixth day, whether it is an elephant or a buffalo, it can never free itself from me. O best of Kouravas! You have not only been grasped by a serpent that belongs to the inferior species. I have the gift of a boon. When I was swiftly falling from the vimana on which Shakra is seated, I asked the illustrious supreme sage[42] to free me from the curse. Flooded with compassion, the energetic one replied, 'O king! You will be freed after some time has passed.' Then I fell down on the ground, but did not lose my memory. Therefore, what has been determined in ancient times is fixed in my mind and memory. The rishi told me, 'He who replies accurately to your questions, will free you from your curse. O king! Once grasped by you, even if it is a being that is stronger and superior to you, it will immediately lose its mettle.' Affectionate towards me and driven by compassion, those brahmanas then instantly disappeared.[43] O immensely radiant one! I thus assumed the form of a serpent. I live in this unholy hell, performing evil deeds, waiting for the appointed time."

'Then the mighty-armed Bhimasena told the serpent, "O great serpent! I am not angry with you. Nor do I blame myself. Sometimes a man is capable of bringing happiness or unhappiness. At other times, he is incapable. One's mind should not be worried at these comings and goings. How can one's own exertions rise above destiny? I think that destiny is supreme and endeavours are meaningless. Behold. Because of adverse destiny, I have lost the strength of my arms. Without any immediate reason, I have been reduced to this state now. But today, I do not sorrow as much over my own destruction as I do over my brothers, who have been dislodged from their kingdom and have been exiled to this wilderness. The Himalayas are difficult of access and are infested with yakshas and rakshasas. On seeing me thus, they will be confounded and will fall down. On hearing of my destruction, they will lose all enterprise. They follow dharma. It was I who drove them, because of my greed for the kingdom. Or perhaps the intelligent Arjuna, who knows all the weapons and is invincible to the gods, the gandharvas and the rakshasas, will be overcome by sorrow. The mighty-armed one, immensely strong, is capable, with his strength, of dislodging the king of the gods from his seat, not to speak of Dhritarashtra's sons, deceitful in gambling, hated by all the worlds and addicted to insolence and avarice. I sorrow over my poor mother, so loving towards her sons. She always wished that we might attain a greatness superior to that of others. O serpent! At my destruction, she will be without a protector. All the desires that she had for me will become unsuccessful. The twins, Nakula and Sahadeva, followed their elder. They were always protected through the strength of my arms and were proud of their manliness. They will lose their enterprise. They will be dislodged from prowess and valour. At my destruction, they will be without protection. This is what I think." In this way, Vrikodara lamented a lot. He was coiled by the serpent and could not move at all.

‘Kounteya Yudhishthira saw all the terrible omens and was disturbed in his mind. He thought about these evil portents. The sky to the south of the hermitage was ablaze.[44] A she-jackal stationed herself there and let out a terrible and dreadful howl. There was a dreadful-looking quail,[45] with one wing, one eye and one foot. It was seen to vomit blood, screeching harshly in the direction of the sun. A hot and rough wind began to blow, attracting gravel. All the animals and birds wailed towards the south. A black crow cawed from the back, “Go! Go!” His[46] right arm repeatedly trembled. There were tremors in his heart and in his left leg. Foretelling of evil, his left eye began to throb. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Sensing great danger, the intelligent Dharmaraja asked Droupadi, “Where is Bhima?” Panchali answered that Vrikodara had been gone for a long time. Accompanied by Dhoumya, the mighty-armed king then left. He gave instructions to Dhananjaya to protect Droupadi. He instructed Nakula and Sahadeva to tend to the brahmanas. Then the lord followed Bhima’s footprints from the hermitage and saw the earth marked with the signs of his passage. As the brave one, with the speed of the wind, had rushed forward on his hunt, the wind created by his thighs had broken down and strewn trees along the path. Following these signs, he reached the mountainous cavern and saw his younger brother immobile there, in the grasp of that Indra among serpents.’

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Vaishampayana said, ‘On seeing his beloved brother encircled in the coils of the snake, the wise Yudhishthira approached and told the brave one, “O one whose mother is Kunti! How has this misfortune befallen you? Who is this supreme of serpents, with a body that is equal to a mountain?” On seeing his elder brother Dharmaraja, he[47] told his brother everything that had happened and how he had come to be grasped. Yudhishthira said, “O serpent! Yudhishthira is asking you. Tell the truth. Are you a god, a daitya or a serpent? O serpent! What must be done for you, or what must be told you, so as to please you? What food must be brought to you? What must be done to set him free?”

‘The serpent replied, “O unblemished one! I was earlier a king named Nahusha, your ancestor. O lord of men! I was Ayu’s famous son and fifth in the line from Soma.[48] Through sacrifices, austerities, studying, self-restraint and valour, I obtained unrivalled lordship of the three worlds. Having attained that prosperity, insolence overcame me. Thousands of brahmanas carried my palanquin. Intoxicated with my fortune, I insulted those brahmanas. O lord of the earth! I have been reduced to this state because of Agastya. O Pandava! O king! But because of the favours of the great-souled Agastya, I have not lost my wisdom even now. I have obtained your younger brother as my food at

the sixth point in time.[49] I will not free him. Nor do I desire any other food. But if you answer the questions I ask you, I will later free your brother Vrikodara."

'Yudhishthira replied, "O serpent! Tell me whatever you like. O serpent! If I can, I will answer and please you. You are certainly aware of what only a brahmana can know. O king of the serpents! On hearing your words, I will reply."

'The serpent asked, "O king! O Yudhishthira! Who is a brahmana and what should he know? From your words, I think that you are extremely wise."

'Yudhishthira replied, "O Indra among serpents! It is said that a brahmana is one in whom truthfulness, charity, forgiveness, good conduct, lack of cruelty, self-control and compassion can be seen. O serpent! He obtains knowledge of the supreme brahman, which is beyond happiness and unhappiness, and on attaining which, there is no sorrow. What else will you say?"

'The serpent asked, "Truthfulness and knowledge of the brahman can be found in all the four varnas. O Yudhishthira! Truthfulness, charity, lack of anger, lack of cruelty, non-violence and compassion can also be found among shudras. O lord of men! You have said that the object of knowledge is beyond happiness and unhappiness. But there is nothing that is free from either. I do not think such a thing exists."

'Yudhishthira replied, "If these traits, not even found in a brahmana, are seen in a shudra, he is not a shudra. A brahmana in whom a brahmana's traits are not found, is a shudra. O serpent! It is said that one in whom these traits are found is a brahmana. O serpent! One in whom these traits are not found, is marked as a shudra. Then again, you have said that the object of knowledge does not exist, because there is nothing that is free from both those sentiments.[50] O serpent! It is your view that nothing can exist without those two. There is a state between cold and heat that is neither cold nor heat. Like that, there is something in between that is neither happiness, nor unhappiness. That is my view. O serpent! What do you think?"

'The serpent said, "O king! O one with a long life! If you assert that a brahmana is known by his conduct, birth has no meaning, as long as those characteristics can be seen."

'Yudhishthira replied, "O great serpent! O immensely wise one! I think that among men, birth is difficult to determine, because of mixed birth among all the varnas. Men always beget children on women from all varnas. All men are equal in speech, intercourse, birth and death. The proof of this can be found in the words of the learned rishis, who have said 'We sacrifice' and so on, basing this entirely on conduct.[51] The birth rituals of a man are performed even before the navel chord has been severed. At that time, the mother is Savitri and the father is the preceptor.[52] Before initiation into knowledge of the Vedas, everyone is a shudra by conduct. When there is a difference of opinion on this, Svayambhuva Manu[53] has categorically stated, 'The observance of

rituals determines varna. If conduct cannot be seen, mixed races overwhelmingly dominate.' O Indra among serpents! O great serpent! O supreme among serpents! I have earlier defined as a brahmana one in whom the principles of good conduct are seen."

'The serpent said, "O Yudhishthira! I have listened to your words. You know what should be known. How can I now devour your brother Vrikodara?"'

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'Yudhishthira asked, "In this world, there is no one as knowledgeable as you in the Vedas and the Vedangas.[54] Tell me. Which are the deeds through which one attains the supreme objective?"

'The serpent replied, "O descendant of the Bharata lineage! It is my view that one goes to heaven by giving to those who are worthy, speaking the truth and by always resorting to non-violence."

'Yudhishthira asked, "O serpent! Between generosity and truthfulness, which is seen to be superior? Between non-violence and good conduct, which is superior and which is inferior?"

'The serpent replied, "The superiority or inferiority of generosity versus truthfulness or non-violence vis-à-vis good conduct is determined by whether the effects of these deeds are more or less important. There are times when truthfulness is regarded as superior to generosity. O Indra among kings! There are times when generosity is regarded as superior to truthfulness. O mighty archer! O lord of the earth! In that way, there are occasions when non-violence is superior to kind words and other occasions when kind words are superior. O king! In this fashion, the superiority depends on the effects. If there is anything else that you are thinking of, tell me. I will explain."

'Yudhishthira asked, "O serpent! What are the deeds through which one can attain heaven? What are seen to be the certain fruits of the disembodied soul? Explain these things to me."

'The serpent replied, "O king! Depending on one's own deeds, there are seen to be three end goals—human birth, residence in heaven and rebirth as inferior species. These are the three ends. Through continuous acts of charity and deeds based on reasons of non-violence, one attains heaven from this world of men. O Indra among kings! Through the reverse deeds, a man is born as inferior species. O son![55] I will tell you about the specifics. A man who is addicted to desire and anger, and overcome by violence and avarice, is dislodged and is reborn as inferior species. It has separately been said that one who is born as inferior species, can be reborn as a human. Thus, cattle and horses are seen to have attained divine status. O son! Such is the goal of all animals, depending on one's deeds. O king! The self should always be established in greatness. From one birth to another, the soul enjoys the fruits that come from a body,

though it is distinct. This is the characteristic of all beings.”

‘Yudhishthira asked, “O serpent! Tell me exactly how the soul is established in a body and experiences sound, touch, colour, taste and smell. O immensely intelligent one! Do you also not separately experience these senses? O supreme among serpents! Tell me everything that I have asked.”

‘The serpent replied, “O one with a long life! When the soul has resorted to a physical body and has established itself in control, it experiences each of those senses, depending on their characteristics. O bull among the Bharata lineage! Learn from me that knowledge, intelligence and the mind are faculties that determine a soul’s enjoyment of the senses. O son! Through the mind, the embodied being experiences one after another, from one object to another, the senses that flow out of each of these objects. O tiger among men! The mind is thus the cause of all perceptions among animals. At the same time, it cannot experience multiple objects. O tiger among men! The soul is established between the eyebrows. It creates the intelligence about different kinds of objects. O tiger among kings! According to the wise, different kinds of experience flow from this intelligence. These are the ways of an embodied soul.”

‘Yudhishthira asked, “Tell me. What are the specific characteristics that distinguish the mind and the intelligence? What is said to be the supreme deed for those who wish to know about the soul?”

‘The serpent replied, “O son! Through various distractions, the intelligence is said to follow the soul. Though consciousness is derived from it,[56] it is said to control the soul. Intelligence is not subject to the different qualities. But the mind has these qualities. O son! Thus have I distinguished between the mind and intelligence. But you yourself have knowledge about these matters. What do you think?”

‘Yudhishthira said, “O best among those who are endowed with intelligence! Your intelligence is supreme. You know everything that there is to know. Why are you then asking me this question? You are omniscient. You dwelt in heaven. You were the performer of extraordinary deeds. I am confronted with great uncertainty. How did delusion overcome you?”

‘The serpent replied, “Even an extremely strong and brave man is deluded by prosperity. It is my view that all those who are immersed in happiness become confused in intelligence. O Yudhishthira! I became deluded because of my prosperity. I was intoxicated. Though enlightened, I descended into this state and am enlightening you now. O great king! O scorcher of enemies! You have performed a service towards me. Because of my conversation with a virtuous one,[57] I have been freed from the grievous curse. In earlier times, I used to roam around heaven in a celestial chariot. Intoxicated with my vanity, I thought of nothing else. Brahmarshis, gods, gandharvas, yakshas, rakshasas, serpents, kinnaras and all the residents of the three worlds had to pay me taxes. O lord of the earth! Such was the power of my glance, that whatever being my

eyes happened to behold, the strength of my sight robbed him of his energy. Thousands of brahmarshis bore my palanquin. O king! This misconduct brought about my dislodging from prosperity. One day, when the sage Agastya was bearing me, my feet happened to touch him. In anger, destiny[58] then spoke these words, 'May you be destroyed. Become a serpent.' At that, I fell down from that supreme vimana. I lost all my ornaments. While I was falling down, with my face downwards, I saw that I had become a predatory serpent.[59] Then I asked that brahmana, 'Please free me from this curse. O illustrious one! I have transgressed out of my folly. Please pardon me.' As I was falling, he was overcome by compassion and told me, 'O lord of men! Dharmaraja Yudhishthira will free you from this curse, once the fruits of your insolence and terrible strength have decayed. O great king! You will then attain supreme fruits.' On witnessing the strength of his austerities, great wonder was born in me. That is the reason I asked you about the brahman and brahmanas. O king! Truthfulness, self-control, austerities, non-violence and constant benevolence are the means whereby men attain salvation, not through birth or lineage. Your immensely strong brother, Bhimasena, is safe and unhurt. O great king! May you be fortunate. I will return to heaven."'

Vaishampayana said, 'Having said this, King Nahusha discarded the body of a boa. Assuming a celestial form, he returned to the world of the thirty gods. The fortunate, Yudhishthira, with dharma in his soul, returned to the hermitage with his brother Bhima, accompanied by Dhoumya. Dharmaraja Yudhishthira told the assembled brahmanas the details of everything that had happened. O king! On hearing this, the brahmanas, the other three brothers and the famous Droupadi were astounded. All the best of the brahmanas desired the welfare of the Pandavas. Censuring Bhima's rashness, they told him not to act in this way. The Pandavas were extremely delighted at seeing the immensely strong Bhima freed from fear. They happily enjoyed themselves.'

Section Thirty-Seven

Markandeya Samasya Parva

This parva has 1694 shlokas and forty-three chapters.

Chapter 476(179): 18 shlokas
Chapter 477(180): 49 shlokas
Chapter 478(181): 41 shlokas
Chapter 479(182): 21 shlokas
Chapter 480(183): 32 shlokas
Chapter 481(184): 25 shlokas
Chapter 482(185): 54 shlokas
Chapter 483(186): 129 shlokas
Chapter 484(187): 55 shlokas
Chapter 485(188): 83 shlokas
Chapter 486(189): 31 shlokas
Chapter 487(190): 82 shlokas
Chapter 488(191): 28 shlokas
Chapter 489(192): 29 shlokas
Chapter 490(193): 27 shlokas
Chapter 491(194): 30 shlokas
Chapter 492(195): 39 shlokas
Chapter 493(196): 21 shlokas
Chapter 494(197): 44 shlokas
Chapter 495(198): 94 shlokas
Chapter 496(199): 34 shlokas
Chapter 497(200): 54 shlokas
Chapter 498(201): 20 shlokas
Chapter 499(202): 25 shlokas
Chapter 500(203): 51 shlokas
Chapter 501(204): 27 shlokas
Chapter 502(205): 29 shlokas
Chapter 503(206): 34 shlokas
Chapter 504(207): 20 shlokas
Chapter 505(208): 8 shlokas
Chapter 506(209): 25 shlokas
Chapter 507(210): 19 shlokas
Chapter 508(211): 31 shlokas
Chapter 509(212): 30 shlokas
Chapter 510(213): 52 shlokas
Chapter 511(214): 37 shlokas
Chapter 512(215): 23 shlokas
Chapter 513(216): 15 shlokas
Chapter 514(217): 14 shlokas
Chapter 515(218): 49 shlokas
Chapter 516(219): 58 shlokas
Chapter 517(220): 27 shlokas
Chapter 518(221): 80 shlokas

The Pandavas return to Kamyaka and are visited by Krishna and then by the sage Markandeya. The word samasya *means the completion or filling up of that which is incomplete. This section is so named because of a long conversation between the Pandavas and Markandeya. It has the stories of Manu, the flood and the fish, details about the four yugas (eras) and different kinds of fires, the stories of Vamadeva, Indradyumna, Dhundhumara, Koushika, Angiras and Skanda.*

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Vaishampayana said, 'While they were living there, the rainy season, which brings an end to the summer's heat and ensures happiness to all beings, arrived. Clouds heavy with thunder enveloped the sky and all the directions. Through night and day, it rained down continuously in hundreds and thousands of torrents, ending the heat. The net of the sun's rays disappeared and it was radiant with lightning. Grass sprouted from the earth and flies and reptiles were intoxicated. Sprinkled with water, everything was peaceful and the smoke and the dust vanished. When everything was covered with water, nothing could be discerned, plain and uneven terrain or rivers and land. The rivers were turbulent with water and made a loud whistling noise, like arrows. At the end of the summer, they made the groves look beautiful. Many different sounds could be heard in the groves—of boars, animals and birds, drenched with rain. *Stokaka*s,[1] peacocks and male cuckoos were maddened and fluttered around, together with proud frogs. Thus, while they safely roamed around in the desert regions, the rainy season arrived in many forms and the roar of the clouds passed.

'Autumn arrived, with masses of curlews and swans. The forest was covered with new enclosures. The water that flowed downwards became clear. Everything was peaceful in autumn and the great-souled Pandavas found it infested with animals and birds. The sky and the stars were clear. They saw that the nights were cooled by clouds, with the dust pacified, and shining with planets, many stars and the moon. They saw auspicious rivers and ponds, the bearers of cool water, adorned with white water lilies[2] and white lotuses.[3] They found great delight in roaming around the sacred tirtha of Sarasvati. Its banks were as wide as the sky and were covered with nipas[4] and wild rice. The brave ones, the wielders of firm bows, were extremely happy on seeing the sacred Sarasvati, overflowing with clear water. O Janamejaya! While they dwelt there, the sacred night of parvasandhi in autumn, in the month of Kartika, arrived.[5] All the Pandavas, the best of the Bharata lineage, spent that great and supreme conjunction in the company of the holy and great-souled ascetics. When the dark fortnight set in, the Pandavas, together with Dhoumya, the charioteers and the cooks, travelled to Kamyaka.'

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Vaishampayana said, 'The Kounteyas, with Yudhishthira at the forefront, arrived in Kamyaka and were welcomed by the masses of sages. They began to live there with

Krishna.[6] When Pandu's sons dwelt safely there, they were surrounded on all sides by many brahmanas. Then a certain brahmana said, "The mighty-armed Shouri,[7] Arjuna's beloved friend, self-controlled and endowed with wisdom, will come here. It is known to Hari that the extenders of the Kuru lineage have arrived here. Hari always wishes to see you and has your welfare in mind. The immensely ascetic Markandeya has lived for many years, devoting himself to studies and austerities. He will soon arrive to meet you." While he was still speaking, Keshava could be seen. That supreme of charioteers was on his chariot, yoked to Sainya and Sugriva.[8] He was with Satyabhama, like Maghavan with Poulami.[9] Devaki's son had arrived to visit the best of the Kurus.

'Descending from his chariot, the wise one happily greeted Dharmaraja, as is prescribed, and Bhima, supreme among strong ones. He worshipped Dhoumya and was himself worshipped by the twins. Then he embraced Gudakesha[10] and spoke comforting words to Droupadi. Having seen the beloved warrior Phalguna, who had returned after a long time, Dasharha,[11] the destroyer of enemies, embraced him again and again. Similarly, Satyabhama, Krishna's beloved queen, embraced Droupadi, the beloved wife of the Pandavas. Then all the Pandavas, with their wife and their priest,[12] worshipped Pundarikaksha[13] and seated themselves around him. The wise Krishna was reunited with Partha Dhananjaya, the oppressor of asuras. The great-souled lord of beings was as radiant as the illustrious lord, when united with Guha.[14] The one with the diadem on his head recounted the details of what had happened in the forest to Gada's senior, exactly as they had occurred.[15] He then asked him how Subhadra was, together with Abhimanyu. In the prescribed fashion, Madhu's slayer[16] showed honours to Partha,[17] Krishna[18] and the priest.

'When Yudhishthira was seated with them, he praised the king[19] and spoke these words. "O Pandava! Dharma is superior to winning the kingdom. O king! It is said that austerity leads to it. You have lived by your own dharma, with truthfulness and virtue. You have won this world and the next. You first studied, and then observed the vows. You next became skilled in the use of weapons. You obtained riches by practising the dharma of kshatriyas. You have performed all the ancient sacrifices. You are not addicted to the dharma of sexual pleasure and desire. O Indra among kings! You have never acted out of desire. Nor have you given up dharma out of greed for artha. It is for these reasons that you are Dharmaraja. O king! O Partha! Though you obtained the kingdom, riches and objects of pleasure, benevolence, truthfulness, austerities, devotion, conciliation, forbearance and forgiveness always brought you supreme pleasure. O Pandava! When the assembled inhabitants of Kurujangala[20] saw Krishna afraid and outraged in the assembly hall, an act that was contrary to dharma and good conduct,

who but you could have endured it? There is no doubt that you will soon protect your subjects again and be restored to all the prosperity that you desire. Once your oath has been fulfilled, we will act so as to chastise the Kurus." Then the lion of the Dasharhas spoke to Dhoumya, Krishna, Yudhishthira, the twins and Bhima. "It is your good fortune that Kiriti has happily returned, having obtained the weapons." The lord of the Dasharhas, together with his well-wishers, then spoke to Krishna Yajnaseni. "O Krishna! O Yajnaseni! Your young ones are devoted to truthful vows, show good conduct and wish to become foremost in the knowledge of weapons. They always associate with righteous ones. Your sons follow the path of meditation. O Krishna! Though your father and your brothers seek to attract them with the kingdom and the territory, these young ones find no attraction in the houses of Yajnasena[21] or their maternal uncles. In a desire to become foremost in the knowledge of weapons, they safely travelled in the direction of Anarta.[22] O Krishna! Your sons entered the city of the Vrishnis.[23] They do not feel any jealousy towards the gods.[24] Without fail, Subhadra always instructs them in conduct, just as you yourself would have instructed them, or the arya Kunti. O Krishna! Just as Rukmini's son is the instructor and guide of Aniruddha, Abhimanyu, Sunitha and Bhanu, he is just the same to your sons too.[25] Prince Abhimanyu is a skilled teacher. He constantly instructs the brave ones in fighting with clubs, swords, shields and missiles, and in handling chariots and horses. Like an instructor, Rukimini's son has given them many weapons and has taught them well. He finds great satisfaction in the valour of your sons and of Abhimanyu. O Yajnaseni! When your sons go out for sport, each of them is followed by a retinue of chariots, vehicles and elephants." Then Krishna again addressed Dharmaraja. "O king! Let the warriors of Dasharha, Kukura and Andhaka[26] always be intent on following your orders. Let them be established wherever you desire. The army of the Madhus[27] has infantry, horses, chariots and elephants. It raises a forceful storm with its bows and is led by Halayudha.[28] O Indra among men! It is ready to accomplish your tasks. O Pandava! Let Dhritarashtra's son Suyodhana,[29] foremost among the performers of evil deeds, traverse the path followed by Soubha and Soubha's lord, together with his relatives and well-wishers.[30] O Indra among kings! Live where you desire, for the time appointed by you in the assembly hall. But after that, when the Dasharha warriors have cut down the warriors,[31] the city of Nagapura[32] will await your return. When you have subdued your anger and cleansed your torment, when you have finished roaming around as you desire, then, bereft of sorrow, you will return to the prosperous city of Nagapura and regain your kingdom." On hearing the detailed views of that great-souled one, supreme among men, Dharmaraja approved of them. He joined his hands in salutation and replied to Keshava, "O Keshava! There is no doubt that you are the refuge of the Partha Pandavas. When the time has come, there is

no doubt that you will accomplish these deeds. As we have promised, we will spend a complete twelve years in this wilderness. O Keshava! After spending the stipulated time incognito, the Pandavas will resort to you again."'

Vaishampayana said, 'O descendant of the Bharata lineage! While Varshneya[33] and Dharmaraja were conversing in this way, the great ascetic Markandeya, with dharma in his soul, was seen to arrive. He had lived for many thousands of years and had become aged through his austerities. When the aged rishi, who had lived for many thousands of years, arrived—all the brahmanas, together with Krishna and the Pandavas, offered him worship. When the supreme among rishis was comfortably seated, with the approval of the brahmanas and the Pandavas, Keshava addressed him. "The Pandavas, the assembled brahmanas, Droupadi, Satyabhama and I myself wish to hear your supreme words. O Markandeya! Therefore, tell us about the sacred accounts of the past, characterized by eternal and wise good conduct on the part of kings, women and rishis." While they were seated there, devarshi Narada, pure in soul, also arrived to see the Pandavas. All those bulls among men honoured the great-souled one. As has been decreed, they offered the learned one *padya* and arghya.[34] On knowing that they were about to hear Markandeya's words, devarshi Narada approved of the proposal. Narada knew everything about time and smilingly told him, "O brahmarshi! Tell the Pandavas whatever you wish to say." Thus addressed, the great ascetic Markandeya replied, "Wait for some time. There are many accounts to be told." Thus addressed, the Pandavas, together with the brahmanas, waited for some time. They looked at the great sage, as radiant as the sun at noon.'

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Vaishampayana said, 'On seeing that the great sage was willing to speak, Pandava, the king of the Kurus,[35] asked him to begin his accounts. "You know everything about the eternal exploits of the gods, the daityas, the great-souled rishis and the rajarshis. We are of the view that you are worthy of our servitude and attendance. We have wished to meet you for a long time. Devaki's son has also come here to see us. I see that I have been dislodged from happiness. I see all the evil sons of Dhritarashtra prospering. Then the thought strikes me that man is the agent for all his deeds, be they good or evil, and reaps the fruits. How can god then be the agent? O supreme among those who know about the brahman! Why is there happiness and unhappiness for men? Are those fruits in this body? Or in another body later? O supreme among brahmanas! How can the good and evil fruits of an embodied being follow him in this body and how are they united with him after death? Do we reap the fruits in this world or in another world after death? O Bhargava![36] When an animal is dead, where do his deeds remain?"

'Markandeya replied, "O supreme among eloquent ones! What you have spoken is a

question that is worthy of you. You know everything that there is to be known. But you are asking me so that the theory can be established. I will now narrate to you how men undergo happiness and unhappiness here, and in the hereafter. Listen with undivided attention. In the beginning, Prajapati[37] created pure embodied beings with unblemished bodies. They were all devoted to dharma. O descendant of the Kuru lineage! These ancient and sacred men were evolved from the brahman. Their strength and resolution did not waver. They were good in their vows and truthful. As they desired, they could all soar up to the sky to meet with the gods. Then they all descended again and roamed as they willed. These men could die when they willed. They lived when they willed. They faced few difficulties and had no fear. They were accomplished in their objectives and free from difficulties. They could see the masses of gods and the great-souled rishis. They could see everything about dharma. They were self-controlled and were devoid of envy. They lived for thousands of years and had thousands of sons. But over a period of time, they were restricted to walking on the earth alone. They were overcome by desire and anger. They began to thrive on duplicity and deceit. These men were overcome by greed and delusion and the gods abandoned them. They performed evil and impure deeds and were reborn as inferior species, or went to hell. They were repeatedly cooked in this world in different ways.[38] Their desires were in vain. Their resolutions were in vain. Their knowledge was in vain. They lost their senses. They were afraid of everything. They reaped the fruits of misery. Since they were often distinguished by their impure deeds, they were born in inferior families. They suffered from many forms of disease. They were evil in soul and became oppressive. Their lives became short and wicked. They suffered from their terrible deeds. They became dependent on every kind of desire. They were atheists and destroyed all institutions.

'"O Kounteya! After death, any animal's outcome is determined by his own deeds. But you asked about where learned and evil-minded deeds are stored. How are the fruits of evil and good deeds recovered? Listen to the understanding on this matter. In the original subtle body created by the gods, man accumulates a great store of good and evil deeds. When his life is over, he gives up the body that is almost destroyed and is immediately reborn in a different womb, without any gap. In that,[39] his good deeds follow him like a shadow. The fruits give birth to happiness or unhappiness. Those who lack the insight of knowledge think that an animal is governed by rules of death and is not affected by good or evil marks. O Yudhishthira! But this is the fate of those who are without intelligence. Beyond this, listen to the supreme fate of those who are wise. These men have tormented themselves with austerities. They are devoted to all the sacred texts. They are unwavering in their vows and are established in truth. They are always engaged in serving their preceptors. They are good in conduct and noble in birth. They are forgiving, self-controlled and extremely energetic. They are often born in pure wombs and are marked with auspicious signs. They are in control of their senses

and have mastered them. Since they are pure, they do not suffer from disease. Because they suffer from few difficulties, they are without obstacles. Whether born prematurely, or in time, or even in the womb, they know everything through the sight of knowledge and about the relationship between their own souls and the supreme one. After having been born in this world of deeds, they regain heaven. Some things are due to destiny. Some things are due to chance. And some things are due to one's own action. O king! That is how men come by their fate. Do not think otherwise. O supreme among eloquent ones! O Yudhishthira! Hear an account about what I think to be the supreme good in this world of men. Some find greatness here, and not in the hereafter. Others find greatness here, but not in the hereafter. Others find it in both and still others find it in neither. Those who have a great deal of riches always adorn their bodies and find pleasure. O slayer of enemies! But since they are addicted to bodily pleasures, they find enjoyment in this world, but not in the next. There are those who are united with yoga and austerities. While their bodies decay, they are addicted to studying. They are in control of their senses and devoted to the welfare of beings. O destroyer of enemies! They find enjoyment in that world, and not in this. There are those who first lead a life of dharma. In course of time, they obtain prosperity through dharma. They obtain a wife and perform sacrifices. They enjoy this world and the next. There are the ignorant ones who ignore learning, austerities and donations and do not have offspring. They do not find happiness in this world, nor in the next. But all of you are extremely valorous and powerful. You are divine in your energy. You have obtained learning. Your bodies are capable. To accomplish the task of the gods, you have been born in this world from the one hereafter. O brave ones! Having performed great deeds and having satisfied the gods, the rishis and the masses of ancestors with austerities, rituals and conduct, in due course, later attain heaven, the habitation of those who perform sacred deeds, through your own deeds. O Indra among Kouravas! Do not suffer from anxiety. Do not trouble your mind because of these difficulties. You are deserving of happiness."'

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Vaishampayana said, 'Then Pandu's sons told the great-souled Markandeya, "Tell us about the greatness of the foremost of brahmanas. We wish to hear about this."

'Thus addressed, the illustrious Markandeya, the great ascetic, extremely energetic and knowledgeable in all the sacred texts, replied, "There was once a handsome prince who was the king of the Haihayas. He was the pride of his lineage and the destroyer of enemy cities. He was powerful and handsome and he went out to hunt. When he was roaming around in that forest, overgrown with grass and bushes, he saw a sage who was clad in a black antelope skin as his upper garment. He mistook him to be a deer and killed him in the forest. He was pained and sorrowful at his deed and lost his senses. O lord of the earth! The lotus-eyed prince went to the kings of the Haihayas, great in

their souls, and told them exactly what had happened. O son![40] On hearing about the violence done to a sage who lived on roots and fruits, and on seeing it,[41] they were distressed in their minds. They asked everywhere about whose son he was, and followed a road to the hermitage of Tarkshya Arishtanemi.[42] They bowed down before the great-souled sage, whose vows were unwavering. They stood there, while the sage honoured them in return. Then they told the great-souled sage, 'We are not deserving of these honours. Through our evil deeds, we have killed a brahmana.' The brahmana rishi replied, 'How have you killed a brahmana? Where is he? Tell me and behold the strength of my austerities.' All of them then told him everything, exactly as it had happened. But when they returned, they could not see the dead body of the rishi there. They searched everywhere and were ashamed. They felt as if their senses had been in the midst of a dream. The sage Tarkshya then told them, 'O destroyers of the cities of enemies! Is this the brahmana who had been killed by you? O kings! This is my son. He possesses the power of austerities.' O lord of the earth! On seeing that rishi,[43] they were struck with great wonder and exclaimed, 'This is extremely wonderful. We have seen him dead. How can a dead person be restored to life? It is through the power of austerities that he has become alive again? O brahmana rishi! We are desirous of hearing this, if indeed it can be heard.' He[44] replied, 'O kings! Death cannot exhibit its powers before us. I will briefly tell you about the reason for this. We know nothing but the truth. We do not even think of that which is false. Since we are always established in our own dharma, death holds no fear for us. We always speak about the welfare of brahmanas, and never about their evil deeds. Therefore, we have no fear of death. We serve our guests with food and drink. We always feed our servants. We live in a region inhabited by energetic ones. Therefore, we have no fear of death. I have only told you a very little bit. Now all of you return, without any envy. Do not be frightened that you have sinned.' O bull among the Bharata lineage! Then they agreed that it would be that way, and worshipped the great sage. The kings happily returned to their own kingdom."'

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'Markandeya said, "Here more about the greatness of brahmanas. There was a rajarshi by the name of Vainya, who was instated in a horse sacrifice. We have heard that Atri desired to go to him for riches. But determining the nature of his dharma, he gave up this desire. After reflecting about this, the immensely energetic one decided to retire to the forest. He summoned the one who was his wife according to dharma, and his sons, and spoke to them. 'If we wish to reap great fruits, free from any hindrances, you should agree that it is best to swiftly retire to the forest.' Driven by dharma, his wife replied, 'Go to the great-souled Vainya and ask for a lot of riches from him. The rajarshi is

donating gifts and will give you the riches you desire. O brahmana rishi! Having received a lot of riches and having distributed it among your servants and sons, then go wherever you wish. This is the supreme dharma, as indicated by those who are learned in dharma.' Atri replied, 'O great-souled one! The immensely fortunate Goutama has told me that Vainya is conversant with dharma and artha and is devoted to the vow of truthfulness. But he is surrounded by brahmanas who hate him. So Goutama has told me. Therefore, I have decided not to go there. When I speak words of well-being that are full of dharma, artha and kama, they will contradict them and render them useless. O immensely wise one! But I like the purport of your words and will go. Vainya will give cattle and a lot of riches.'

'"Having said this, the immensely ascetic one swiftly went to Vainya's sacrifice. On reaching the sacrificial grounds, Atri praised the king. 'O king! O Vainya! You are the foremost among all kings on earth. Masses of sages praise you and no one other than you knows dharma.' But the immensely ascetic rishi[45] spoke these angry words. 'O Atri! Do not speak such words again. You have not yet attained wisdom. In this world, Mahendra Prajapati[46] occupies the foremost place.' Atri then replied to Goutama, 'He[47] is as much of a sustainer as Prajapati Indra. You are the one who is confused. Your wisdom has been clouded by ignorance.' Goutama said, 'I know that I am not confused. You are the one who is suffering from delusion. On having seen him, you are speaking thus so as to satisfy him. You do not know what supreme dharma is, nor do you see any need for it. You are as stupid as a child. Why have you then grown old?' They thus argued, in full sight of the sages who had assembled for the sacrifice and they asked, 'What are these two arguing about? Who permitted them entry into Vainya's assembly? Why are they standing here and shouting in this fashion?' O one knowledgeable in all dharma! Then Kashyapa, with supreme dharma in his soul, stepped between the disputants and asked them why they were quarreling. Goutama spoke to the supreme sages who were the assisting priests.[48] 'O bulls among brahmanas! Listen to the question that has arisen between the two of us. Atri says that Vainya is the sustainer, and I have a great doubt on this score.' On hearing this, the great-souled sages swiftly went to Sanatkumara to resolve the doubt, because he was learned in dharma.

'"Having heard their words, reflecting the issue exactly, the great ascetic Sanatkumara replied in words that were in conformity with dharma and artha. Sanatkumara said, 'Brahmanas are united with kshatriyas and kshatriyas with brahmanas. The king is foremost in dharma and he is the lord of his subjects. He is like Shakra, Shukra, the creator and Brihaspati.[49] He is Prajapati, Virata,[50] emperor, kshatriya, the lord of the earth and the lord of men. If one is praised with such words, how can he not be worthy of worship? The king has appellations like "the prime cause", "the conqueror in battles", "the one who attacks", "the contented one", "the fortunate one", "the one who wins

heaven", "the one who is easily victorious", "the expansive one", "the one for whom anger comes from truth", "the one who triumphs over enemies" and "the one who propagates dharma and truth". Out of fear for that which is not dharma, the rishis conferred powers on kshatriyas. Through its energy, the sun removes darkness in heaven, among the gods. Like that, the king eradicates that which is not dharma from earth. Therefore, the proof of the sacred texts is that the king is foremost. I am in favour of the side that has spoken for the king.' The great-souled king was extremely delighted that his side had won. He happily spoke to Atri, who had praised him earlier. 'O brahmana rishi! You have earlier described me as the foremost and greatest among men and an equal to all the gods. Therefore, I will give you a lot of riches, one thousand *shyama* servant girls[51] adorned in excellent garments and ornaments, ten crores of gold coins and ten *bhara*s of gold.[52] O brahmana! I must give you this, because I think you know everything.' The energetic and great-minded Atri accepted all this in the proper fashion. The great ascetic then returned to his home. Happily, the self-controlled one distributed these riches among his sons. For the sake of performing austerities, he then left for the forest."'

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'Yarkandeya said, "O brave one! O conqueror of enemy cities! Listen to what Sarasvati chanted, when she was asked by the wise sage Tarkshya about this matter. Tarkshya asked, 'O fortunate one! What is the best thing for a man here?[53] What should he do so that he does not deviate from his own dharma? O one who is beautiful in all her limbs! Instruct me. Instructed by you, I will not stray from my own dharma. How should one offer oblations into the fire? How should one worship and when? How does one ensure dharma is not destroyed? O fortunate one! Tell me all this, so that I can roam in this world, free from passion.' She was thus lovingly questioned by the one who desired to learn. He was supreme in his intelligence.

'"Sarasvati spoke to brahmana Tarkshya words that were full of dharma, the bringer of welfare. Sarasvati said, 'He who knows the brahman in every region, is always devoted to studying and is pure and calm, goes to the foremost among the cities of the gods, and finds bliss with the immortals. There are many beautiful and large lakes there, bereft of sorrow. They are extremely sacred and full of flowers. They are without mud and full of fish. There are golden lotuses. These are excellent tirthas. The performers of sacred deeds find glory and happiness on those banks, served by apsaras, who wear fragrant scents and are adorned with ornaments, their complexions like that of gold. Those who donate cattle attain the supreme world. By donating bulls, one roams in the world of the sun. By giving garments, one goes to the world of the moon. By giving gold, one attains the immortals. If one gives away a good cow that is easily milked and gives birth to fine calves, one that does not stray, one lives for as many years in heaven,

as there are countable body hairs on his person. One who donates a strong, young and skilled bull that has infinite strength, and is capable of carrying burdens and drawing a plough, obtains the world that is obtained by donating ten cows. O Tarkshya! One who offers oblations into the fire for seven years, is good in vows and righteous in conduct, through one's deeds, purifies seven generations of forefathers and descendants.'

'"Tarkshya asked, 'O beautiful one! I am asking you. Please tell me. What is the ancient vow of agnihotra? Instructed by you, I will learn about the ancient vow of agnihotra.' Sarasvati replied, 'One who is impure, one whose hands have not been washed, one who does not know about the brahman and one who is not wise, cannot make such offerings. Even when hungry, the gods desire purity. They do not accept offerings from those who lack devotion. One who is not a *shrotriya*[54] should not be employed to render oblations to the gods. Such others will be like throwing the oblations away. O Tarkshya! I maintain that no one other than a shrotriya is entitled to offer agnihotra. Those who devotedly offer oblations into the fire, true in their vows, partaking only of leftover food,[55] attain the pure and fragrant world of cows.[56] They see the supreme and true god.' Tarkshya asked, 'O beautiful one! O goddess! You are wisdom. You are extremely fortunate. You are immersed in intelligence. You are the fruits of deeds. You are born in the body, but you are divine in feelings. I am asking you. Who are you?' Sarasvati replied, 'I have arisen from the agnihotra, to remove doubts in the minds of the brahmana rishis. I felt happy at having met you. Therefore, I have explained these things to you exactly and accurately.' Tarkshya said, 'There is no one who is your equal. You shine as radiantly as Shri.[57] Your divine form is extremely beautiful. O fortunate one! You are the goddess of divine wisdom.' Sarasvati replied, 'O foremost among bipeds! I thrive on the best of sacrificial offerings that the learned ones offer. I prosper on those oblations. O brahmana! That is how I become beautiful. O learned one! Whatever objects are rendered in offerings, made of wood or iron or originating in the earth, know that they help attain celestial beauty and wisdom.' Tarkshya said, 'This ensures supreme welfare. That is the reason resolute sages resort to this. Tell me about the supreme bliss that comes from supreme salvation, into which, the wise ones enter.' Sarasvati replied, 'Those who are supremely learned in the Vedas achieve that. It is the supreme and ancient soul. Through studying, donations, vows and sacred yoga, those who are rich in austerities are freed, devoid of sorrow. In the midst, there is a cane, holy and fragrant. It has a thousand pure and radiant branches.[58] The rivers stream forth from its roots, with waters that are extremely sacred and honeyed. The great rivers flow from branch to branch like grains of sand, with grain, cakes, meat and herbs, with the mud of *payasa*.[59] The fire is the mouth and the gods, together with Indra and the Maruts, come to the sacrifice and are worshipped. O sage! That is the supreme spot.'"'

Vaishampayana said, 'Then the Pandava[60] again spoke to Markandeya. "Tell me about the account of Vaivasvata Manu."

'Markandeya replied, "O king! O tiger among men! Vivasvat[61] had a son. He was a maharshi and was extremely powerful. He had radiance equal to that of Prajapati. Manu surpassed his father and grandfather in vigour, energy, success and specifically, austerities. This lord of men practised terrible and great austerities, with his arms raised and standing on one foot, in Vishala Badari.[62] His head faced down and he did not blink. Firmly, he tormented himself with these terrible austerities for ten thousand years. Once, he was engaged in these austerities, clad in wet bark and with matted hair. A fish came up to him on the banks of the Virini[63] and spoke to him. 'O illustrious one! I am a small fish and am frightened of the larger ones. You are good in your vows. Therefore, save me from those fish, especially because it is the rule among fish that large fish prey on smaller ones. This has always been decreed to be our conduct from time immemorial. Therefore, save me from this great sea of terror in which I am immersed. If you save me, I will return the deed.' On hearing these words of the fish, Manu was overcome with compassion. He grasped the fish in his hands. The fish had a body that shone like the moon's rays. Vaivasvata Manu took it out of the river and placed it in a small water pot. O king! Thus tended to well, the fish grew up and Manu specifically looked after it like a son. After a long period of time, the fish became so large that there was no longer any room for it in the water pot. When the fish saw Manu, it again told him, 'O illustrious one! Find a different place for me to live in.' Then the illustrious Manu took it out of the water pot. Manu took the fish to a large pond and threw it in. O destroyer of enemy cities! Thus thrown by Manu, the fish began to grow, for many years. The pond was two yojanas long and one yojana wide. O lotus-eyed one! O lord of the earth! O Kounteya! The fish could no longer move in that pond. On seeing Manu, the fish again said, 'O illustrious one! O righteous one! O father![64] Please take me to the Ganga, the wife of the ocean. I will live there, or wherever else you desire.' On hearing these words of the fish, Manu, the self-controlled lord, took it to the river Ganga and placed it there with his own hands.

'"O chastiser of enemies! The fish began to grow there for some time. On seeing Manu again, the fish spoke these words. 'O lord! Because of my large size, I cannot move around in the Ganga. O illustrious one! Therefore, show me your favours and quickly take me to the ocean.' O Partha! Manu then himself took the fish out of the waters of the Ganga. He took it to the ocean and placed it there. Despite the fish's great size, Manu could carry it easily. Its touch and smell were also pleasant. When the fish was thrown into the ocean by Manu, it seemed to smile and uttered these words. 'O lord! You have always protected me with great care. Now hear from me about the task you

should perform when the time is right. O illustrious one! O immensely fortunate one! The destruction of everything on this earth, mobile and immobile, is near. The time for purging this world has arrived. Therefore, listen to what will bring your greatest welfare. The fear of destruction is nigh for everything that moves, stands, stirs and does not stir. That terrible time of destruction has arrived. You must therefore build a strong and sturdy boat and tether a rope to it. O great sage! You must then ascend it with the saptarshis. Take with you all the seeds that I have mentioned to you earlier. Ascend on the boat and preserve them separately. O one who is beloved of the sages! Wait for me on the boat. O ascetic! I will come to you and you will know me from my horn. I will now depart. Act according to my instructions. O lord! Do not be anxious.' He replied to the fish in these words, 'O lord! I will act accordingly.' Then they took leave of each other and went where they wished.

'"O great king! O brave one! O destroyer of enemies! As he had been instructed by the fish, Manu collected all the seeds. He built an excellent boat and sailed on the waves of the ocean. O lord of the earth! O destroyer of enemy cities! Manu thought about the fish. Knowing about his thoughts, the fish arrived. O supreme among the Bharata lineage! It had a horn. O Indra of Indras among men! When Manu saw the fish in the waters of the ocean, with the form of a large mountain, with a horn as it had said, he tied a noose around the rope and fastened it to the fish's head. O tiger among men! O destroyer of enemy cities! Tethered to the noose in the rope, with great speed, the fish tugged the boat into the waters of the ocean. O lord of men! The boat was tossed around in the ocean. It danced around on the roaring waves, like a drunken woman. On that great ocean, the boat was battered around by great waves. O destroyer of enemy cities! It was whirled around. The earth could not be seen, nor the directions. Everything was enveloped. O bull among men! There was water everywhere, including the sky and heaven. O bull among the Bharata lineage! The world was covered by this turbulence. Everything was invisible, except for the seven rishis, Manu and the fish. O king! In this way, for a large number of years, the fish unceasingly pulled the boat on that flood of water. O bull among men! O descendant of the Kuru lineage! The fish then pulled the boat to the highest peak of the Himalayas. In a smiling and soft tone, it told the rishis, 'Immediately tie the boat to this peak of the Himalayas.' O bull among the Bharata lineage! On hearing the words of the fish, they quickly moored the boat there, to the peak of the Himalayas. O Kounteya! O bull among the Bharata lineage! Know that since that day, the highest peak of the Himalayas has been known as 'Nau-bandhana'.[65]

'"Then, without any hesitation, it spoke to the rishis who were assembled there. 'I am Prajapati Brahma. There is no one superior to me. I have saved you from this fear in the form of a fish. Manu will create all beings—gods, asuras and men, all the worlds, everything that moves and everything that does not move. Through terrible austerities and my favours, he will possess these powers of creating classes of beings and will not

suffer from delusion.' Having spoken these words, the fish instantly disappeared. Vaivasvata Manu himself desired to create all beings. In the process of creating classes of beings, he was overtaken by delusion and performed great austerities. O bull among the Bharata lineage! Through these great austerities, Manu was himself able to create all beings, exactly. I have recounted for you the ancient account known by the name of the fish. This famous account is the cleanser of all sins. A man who listens to Manu's account every day, is happy, is successful in all objectives and goes to the world of heaven."'

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Vaishampayana said, 'With humility, Dharmaraja Yudhishthira again asked the famous Markandeya, "O great sage! You have witnessed the end of many thousands of eras. No one is known who has lived for as long as you, except for the great-souled Brahma Parameshthi.[66] O brahmana! You worshipped Brahma at the time of the destruction, when there was no sky in this world and no gods and danavas. O brahmana rishi! When that destruction is over and the grandfather[67] arises again, you are the only one who witnesses the four types of beings[68] being exactly created by Parameshthi, after he has filled the directions with air and has dispersed the waters. O foremost among brahmanas! You have worshipped the preceptor of the world himself, the grandfather of all the worlds, with supreme meditation. O brahmana rishi! Therefore, through Parameshthi's grace, death, the destroyer of everything and old age, the destroyer of the body, do not overcome you. When there is no sun and fire, no wind and moon, nothing is left of the sky and the earth, when the world with its mobile and immobile objects becomes one large ocean, when the masses of gods and asuras are destroyed and the great serpents uprooted, when the one with the infinite soul is on the lotus and finds his abode on the lotus,[69] you alone are there to worship Brahma, the lord of all beings. O supreme among brahmanas! Everything that has happened before has been seen by you. Therefore, we wish to hear the account about the reasons behind everything. O supreme among brahmanas! You have experienced these many times. There is nothing in all the worlds that is not always known to you."

'Markandeya replied, "I will recount this. I bow down before the one who creates himself,[70] and the ancient and eternal being without decay, Janardana,[71] whose eyes are long and wide and who is attired in yellow. He is the creator and special creator of all beings that are manifest.[72] He cannot be thought of. He is a great wonder. He is supreme purification. He is without beginning and without end. He is the imperishable being that is everywhere in the universe. He is without decay. He is the creator. But he is not created. He is the reason behind all energy. He is the being whom even the gods do not know. O tiger among men! In the beginning, after the destruction of the universe,

there is krita yuga. It is said that this lasts for four thousand years.[73] It is preceded by a sandhya of four hundred years and succeeded by a sandhya of the same duration. Treta yuga is said to last for three thousand years. It is preceded by a sandhya and succeeded by another sandhya of three hundred years each. After that, dvapara yuga has a measure of two thousand years. It is preceded by a sandhya and followed by a sandhya of two hundred years each. The learned have said that kali yuga lasts for one thousand years. It is preceded by a sandhya and succeeded by a sandhya of one hundred years each. Know that the duration of the preceding sandhya and the succeeding sandhya is the same. When kali yuga has decayed, krita yuga returns again. This total period of twelve thousand years is known as a yuga. One thousand such cycles are known as one of Brahma's days. O tiger among men! When the entire universe retreats into Brahma's abode, the wise ones know this as the destruction of the worlds.

'"O bull among the Bharata lineage! When there is little time of one thousand years left at the end of a yuga, all men usually become the speakers of falsehood. O Partha! They perform sacrifices through representatives. They donate through representatives. When such a time arrives, vows are observed through representatives. The brahmanas perform the tasks of shudras. Shudras become the earners of wealth and resort to the dharma of kshatriyas. This is what occurs when the yuga decays. When kali yuga arrives, brahmanas abstain from sacrifices and studying. They discard the offerings of oblations to ancestors. They resort to eating anything. O son![74] Brahmanas no longer meditate and shudras become addicted to meditation. O lord of men! When the earlier form of the world decays, everything is perverse. There are many mleccha[75] kings. They rule on the basis of falsehood and evil. They resort to false promises. O supreme among men! Andhras, Shakas, Pulindas and Yavanas become kings, and Kambojas, Ournikas, shudras and *abhiras*.[76] Not a single brahmana makes a living from his own dharma then. O lord of men! Kshatriyas and vaishyas also do what they should not do. Men are limited in life expectancy and feeble in strength. They are weak in energy and valour. They have little substance and their bodies are weak. They rarely speak the truth. The country is generally empty and the directions are infested with animals and predators. When the end of the yuga is at hand, learning about the brahman is futile. The shudras address as 'bho' and the brahmanas address as 'arya'.[77] O tiger among men! At the end of the yuga, there are many animals. O lord of the earth! Everything that is fragrant no longer possesses any smell then. O tiger among men! What is succulent is no longer fit to be eaten then. There are many children, short in stature, devoid of good conduct. O king! When the destruction of the yuga is near, women use their mouths as their vaginas. The country is dotted with towers.[78] The crossroads are infested with jackals. O king! At the time of the destruction of a yuga, the women are covered with hair. O lord of men! The cows then yield very little milk. The trees yield very little of flowers

and fruit and are full of crows. O lord of the earth! Brahmanas accept gifts from kings who are guilty of killing brahmanas and are the makers of false accusations. The brahmanas are overcome by avarice and delusion. They falsely invoke their own dharma. O lord of the earth! They roam the land in search of alms. Fearful of the burden of taxation, householders become robbers. Others assume the disguise of hermits, but earn a living from trade. Men then bear nails and hair under false pretences.[79] O tiger among men! Those practising brahmacharya become greedy for riches. They observe evil conduct in hermitages and are addicted to drinking. They unite with the wives of their preceptors. They pander to the desires of this world, nourishing their flesh and blood. O tiger among men! When the destruction of the yuga is near, hermitages are infested with many evil characters, who have the quality of living off the food of others. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The illustrious chastiser of Paka[80] no longer showers rain at the right time. All the seeds that are sown, no longer sprout. O unblemished one! The fruits of not following dharma become manifold. O protector of the earth! He who is united with dharma only has a short span of life. There is no dharma left then. O tiger among men! People generally sell goods with false weights. There is a lot of deceit associated with trade. People who are devoted to dharma, decay. The evil ones prosper. Dharma loses its strength and that which is not dharma becomes powerful. Men who are devoted to dharma have short spans of life and are poor. At the time of the destruction of the yuga, those who are against dharma have long spans of life and are prosperous. Subjects seek to attain their objectives by resorting to that which is not dharma. Having accumulated only a little, they become insolent. O king! Having become addicted to deceit, men generally rob riches that have been placed with them in trust. Predators that live off men, birds and animals roam around in parks and sanctuaries in cities. O king! Women conceive at ages of seven years and eight. Men who are ten and twelve years of age beget sons. When they are sixteen years old, men become aged and a man's lifespan is swiftly over. O great king! At the end of a yuga, young ones act like the old. The conduct that should be seen in the young is seen in the old. Women exhibit perverse conduct and deceive their husbands. These lascivious ones pleasure with servants, and even animals.

'"O great king! At the end of those one thousand yugas,[81] when life decays, there is a drought for many years. O lord of the earth! Because beings have weak lives and are starving, they die in large numbers on the surface of the earth. O lord of men! Seven blazing suns appear then. They drink up all the waters from the oceans and the rivers. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! O bull among the Bharata lineage! Everything is then reduced to ashes, be it of wood or grass, dry or wet. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Then the fire of destruction arrives, together with the wind, in a world that has already been dried up by the suns. It penetrates the earth and goes all the way to the nether regions, generating great terror among the gods, the danavas and the yakshas. It

burns down the world of the nagas and whatever can be found on earth. O protector of the earth! It burns down everything in an instant. Twenty yojanas at a time, that fire of destruction, helped by the inauspicious wind, consumes everything in hundreds and thousands, with all the gods, asuras, gandharvas, yakshas, serpents and rakshasas. That blazing lord burns up the entire universe. Then large clouds, extraordinary to see, arise in the sky. They are like herds of elephants, adorned with garlands of lightning. Some are dark like blue lotuses, others are like white lotuses. Some are like filaments. Other clouds are yellow. Still others have the complexion of a raven's egg. Some have the colour of lotus leaves. Others have the complexion of vermilion. Some have the shapes of large cities. Others are like herds of elephants. Some are like collyrium. Others have the shape of crocodiles.[82] The dense clouds are adorned with garlands of lightning. O great king! They are terrible in form and utter a terrible roar. Full of rain, they cover up the entire sky. O great king! They cover up the earth, with all its mountains, forests and mines. They fill and flood it with water. O bull among men! Instructed by Parameshthi, those clouds, with a terrible roar, flood everything. The copious quantities of water fill up the earth. They extinguish the extremely terrible and inauspicious fire. The clouds generate a flood for twelve years. Instructed by the great-souled one, the rains fill everything. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The ocean flows over its tideline. The mountains are splintered. In particular, the earth is also shattered. Then swift winds suddenly whirl the clouds in the sky and that gust tears them up. O lord of men! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The self-creating original god[83] drinks up these terrible winds and continues to sleep on his lotus bed. In that terrible ocean, everything is destroyed, mobile and immobile. The gods, the masses of asuras, the yakshas and the rakshasas are destroyed. O protector of the earth! There are no men, no animals and no trees. There is no firmament in this world. I alone wander around anxiously.

'"O supreme among kings! Once, when I roamed around in this terrible ocean of water, I was filled with great affliction at not seeing any being. O lord of men! I had floated around for a long time in this flood. I was exhausted. But I continued uninterrupted, since I could not find a place to rest. O lord of the earth! Then, in that great flood of water, I saw an extremely tall and wide banyan tree. O lord of men! The branches of that tree were extensive. O protector of the earth! O great king! There, on a bed adorned with celestial spreads, I saw a seated child. His face was like a lotus or the moon. His eyes were as large as a blossoming lotus. O protector of the earth! I was struck with great wonder. How could this child be lying there, when the entire world has been destroyed? O lord of men! Through the power of austerities, I can reflect upon the past, the present and the future. But I could not fathom this child. He had the complexion of an *atasi* flower.[84] He bore the *srivatsa* mark.[85] This seemed to me to be the abode of Lakshmi herself. The radiant child, with eyes like a lotus and bearing the

srivatsa mark, spoke to me in words that were pleasant to hear. 'O son![86] I know that you are exhausted and desire to rest. O Markandeya! O Bhargava![87] Rest here for as long as you wish. O supreme among sages! Enter my body. Rest here. That is the place that has been earmarked for you because of my favours.' O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Thus addressed by the child, I lost all interest in my long life and human state. Then that child suddenly opened his mouth wide. Propelled by destiny, I powerlessly entered his mouth. O lord of men! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! O tiger among men! Thus suddenly entering the inside of his mouth, I saw the entire earth, covered with all its kingdoms and cities, the rivers Ganga, Shatadru, Sita, Yamuna, Koushiki, Charmanvati, Vetravati, Chandrabhaga, Sarasvati, Sindhu, Vipasha, Godavari, Vasvokasara, Nalini, Narmada, the rivers Tamra and Vena with pure waters that bring fortune, Suvena, Krishnavena, Irama, Mahanadi, Shona, Vishalya and Kampuna. O supreme among men! I saw many other rivers that flow on earth. I wandered around inside that great-souled one. I saw oceans infested with aquatic animals. I saw that supreme abode of the waters, a storehouse of gems. I saw the sky there, illuminated with the moon and the sun. It blazed with energy, like the fire and the sun. O king! I saw the earth, beautifully adorned with its forests. O king! The brahmanas were engaged in many sacrifices. The kshatriyas were engaged in ensuring the welfare of all the varnas. O lord of men! The vaishyas were engaged in agriculture. The shudras were always engaged in the servitude of the brahmanas.[88] O king! Then, wandering around inside the great-souled one, I saw the Himalayas and Mount Hemakuta. I saw Nishadha and Shveta, adorned with silver. O protector of the earth! O tiger among men! I saw Mount Gandhamadana and the great mountains Mandara and Nila. O great king! I saw the golden Mount Meru. I saw Mahendra and Vindhya, supreme among mountains. I saw Malaya and Mount Pariyatra. I saw many other mountains too. I saw all these inside his stomach, adorned with jewels. O lord of men! O lord of the earth! I saw lions, tigers, boars and serpents and all the other beings that populate the earth. I saw all these as I was roaming around there. O tiger among men! Having entered the inside and wandering around in various directions, I saw the masses of gods headed by Shakra, the gandharvas, the apsaras, the yakshas and the rishis. O lord of men! There were the daityas, the danavas and collections of kaleyas, the sons of Simhika and other enemies of the gods. Whatever could be seen in the world, mobile or immobile, everything could be seen inside the great-souled one. Surviving on fruits, I roamed around in this entire universe inside his body for more than one hundred years. O lord of the earth! But while I constantly roamed around and thought, nowhere could I see an end to the body.

'"O king! Not being able to find an end to the great-souled one, following the prescribed rites, I sought refuge, in both thought and deeds, with this great-souled one, the granter of boons and worthy among gods. O king! O supreme among men! Then suddenly, a gust of wind expelled me from the mouth of the great-souled one, the mouth

having been opened wide. O lord of the earth! O tiger among men! Then, seated on the branch of the banyan tree, I saw the one who had swallowed up the universe. He was in the form of a child, with the srivatsa mark. O tiger among men! I saw the infinitely energetic one seated there. The immensely radiant one blazed in his yellow attire, bearing the srivatsa mark. He smiled and gently addressed me. 'O Markandeya! O supreme among sages! Tell me. Have you rested while you have been residing inside my body?' Instantly, I seemed to acquire a new insight. I saw myself with a new consciousness, free from the confines of the soul. O son![89] The soles of his well-established feet were coppery red. They were delicate and adorned with soft and red toes. I grasped them, placed them reverentially on my head, and worshipped him. I had seen the limitless powers of that infinitely energetic one. Humbly, I joined my hands in salutation and carefully approached him. I saw the lotus-eyed god who was the soul of all beings. Bowing before him with hands joined in salutation, I said, 'O god! I wish to know about you and about your supreme maya. O illustrious one! Having entered your body through your mouth, I saw all the worlds gathered in your stomach. O god! The gods, the danavas, the rakshasas, the yakshas, the gandharvas and the nagas and all the mobile and immobile objects in the universe were inside your body. O god! Though I ran and continuously roamed around inside your body, through your favours, my memory never failed me. O Pundarikaksha! O unblemished one! I wish to know why you have established yourself in the form of a child. Why have you swallowed up the entire universe? You should explain this to me. O unblemished one! O destroyer of enemies! For what purpose is everything in the universe inside your body? For how long will you be established here? O lord of the gods! I wish to hear this. It is a brahmana's desire. O lotus-eyed one! Tell me everything in detail. O lord! What I have seen is greatly beyond my comprehension.' Having been thus addressed by me, the handsome god of the gods, immensely radiant, supreme among eloquent ones, comforted me and spoke these words to me."'

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'"The god said, 'O brahmana! It is certain that the gods do not know me as I really am. But I am pleased with you and I will tell you how I create. O brahmana rishi! You are devoted to your ancestors and you have sought refuge with me. That is the reason you have seen me in person. Your brahmacharya is also great. The waters are known as *nara* and I consciously gave them that name. Because the waters are always my abode, I am known by the name of Narayana.[90] O supreme among brahmanas! I am known by the name of Narayana. My powers are eternal and undecaying. I am the creator and the destroyer of all beings. I am Vishnu. I am Brahma. I am Shakra, the lord of the gods. I am king Vaishravana.[91] I am Yama, the lord of the dead. I am Shiva. I am Soma. I am Kashyapa Prajapati. O supreme among brahmanas! I am the creator and the special

creator.[92] I am the sacrifice. The fire is my mouth. The earth is my feet. The sun and the moon are my eyes. The directions and the sky are my body. The wind is established in my mind. I have performed many hundreds of sacrifices, in which large numbers of gifts have been given. I am the sacrifices performed by those learned in the Vedas. I am present in the sacrifices of the gods. On earth, the lords and kings of the kshatriyas, desirous of attaining heaven, sacrifice to me. The vaishyas, desirous of attaining heaven, also sacrifice to me. I become Shesha and hold up this earth full of riches, bounded by the four seas and adorned by Meru and Mandara.[93] In earlier times, in the form of a boar, I used my valour to raise up the earth, when it was immersed in the water.[94] O brahmana! O supreme among brahmanas! As the *vadava* fire, I drink up the turbulent waters and disgorge them again.[95] Through my valour, in due order, the brahmanas emerged from my mouth, the kshatriyas from my arms, the vaishyas from my thighs and the shudras from my feet. The Rig Veda, the Sama Veda, the Yajur Veda and the Atharva Veda issued from me and return to me. Ascetics desire supreme tranquility. They wish to control their souls. They are free from desire, anger and hatred. They are without attachment and have overcome sin. They are pure and without pride. They are always learned about matters concerning the soul. These brahmanas always meditate on me. They worship me. I am the light of destruction. I am Yama, the destroyer. I am the sun of destruction. I am the wind of destruction. O supreme among brahmanas! Know that the forms that can be seen in the sky in the form of stars are manifestations of me. So are the oceans, the storehouses of jewels and the four directions. Know them to be my garments, my beds and my abodes. O virtuous one! Desire, anger, happiness, fear and delusion—know them to be different forms of me. O brahmana! So are whatever is obtained by men through performing good deeds, speaking the truth, performing austerities and observing non-violence towards creatures. It is my rules that determine all beings who live in bodies. They do not act in accordance with their desires, but their minds are guided by me. There are brahmanas who have properly studied the Vedas. They perform different kinds of sacrifices. They pacify their souls and control their anger. They earn merits. O learned one! These are incapable of being earned by men who perform evil deeds and are overcome by greed—men who are mean, inferior and not in control of their souls. Know that I am the greatest reward that righteous men strive for. This is the path chosen by those who resort to yoga, but is impossible for ignorant ones to achieve. O learned one! Whenever dharma goes into a decline and adharma[96] raises its head, then I create myself. Whenever daityas, addicted to violence and incapable of being killed by the supreme among the gods, and terrible rakshasas are created in this world, then I am born in the houses of those who perform good deeds. I assume a human form and pacify everything.

"“‘I create gods, humans, gandharvas, serpents, rakshasas and mobile and immobile

objects. Then I destroy them with my maya. When the time arrives for acting, I think again about a body and create myself. Assuming a human form, I ensure that the boundaries are maintained. My complexion is white in krita yuga, yellow in treta yuga and red now in dvapara. It is black in kali yuga. At that time, adharma accounts for three-fourths.[97] When that period of destruction arrives, I assume the terrible form of time and myself destroy the three worlds, with their mobile and immobile objects. I am the one with three strides.[98] I am the soul of the universe. I bring happiness to all the worlds. I am the lord. I go everywhere. I am Hrishikesha, whose stride is expansive. O brahmana! I am the one who moves the wheel of time. I am without form. I am the one who pacifies all beings. I am the endeavour behind the tasks of all the worlds. O supreme among sages! Thus my soul pervades all beings. O Indra among brahmanas! But no one knows me. O brahmana! O unblemished one! Whatever pain you have encountered while inside me, all of that is for your happiness and welfare. O supreme among sages! Whatever you have seen of the worlds, mobile and immobile, all of those have been ordained by my soul. The grandfather of all the worlds[99] is half of my body. I am the one known as Narayana. I hold the conch shell, the chakra and the mace. O brahmana rishi! Throughout the cycle of one thousand yugas, I, the soul of the universe and the grandfather of all the worlds, sleep. O supreme among sages! Throughout that period, I am established here, not a child but in the form of a child, until Brahma wakes up. O brahmana! It is I who granted you boons in the form of Brahma. You are worshipped by masses of brahmana rishis and I am satisfied with you. On seeing everything, mobile and immobile, flooded in a single ocean, you were afflicted. Knowing this, I showed you the universe when you entered my body. On seeing all the worlds there, you were astounded and did not understand. O brahmana rishi! Therefore, I brought you out through my mouth and told you everything about myself, incomprehensible to gods and demons. O brahmana rishi! Until the immensely ascetic and illustrious Brahma awakes, comfortably rest and roam here. O supreme among brahmanas! When the grandfather of all the worlds awakes, as if they are but one, I will create from my body the sky, the earth, light, wind and water and whatever else exists in the world, mobile and immobile.'"

'Markandeya said, "O son![100] After he had spoken thus, the extremely wonderful god disappeared. I then saw the creation of subjects, varied and manifold. O king! O best of the Bharata lineage! O best among all those who uphold dharma! At the end of the yuga, I witnessed all these wonderful things. O tiger among men! The lotus-eyed god whom I saw in earlier times, has now become your relative Janardana. O Kounteya! Because of the boon he bestowed on me, my memory has not failed me. I have a long life and I can die when I wish. He is the lord Krishna Varshneya, the ancient being. He is the mighty-armed Hari, who cannot be thought of, and who seems to be sporting. He is

Satvata,[101] the creator and the special creator and the destroyer. He is Govinda with the srivatsa mark, the universal lord of all Prajapatis. On seeing this tiger of the Vrishni lineage, the original being Vishnu who has no birth and who is dressed in yellow garb, my memory has returned to me. Madhava is the father and mother of all beings. O bulls among the Kourava lineage! Seek refuge with the one who grants protection."'

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Vaishampayana said, 'On hearing these words, the Parthas and the twins, bulls among men, together with Krishna Droupadi, bowed in obeisance before Janardana. O tiger among men! He comforted them in the sweetest of tones. Having consoled them, he honoured them in the appropriate fashion, since they were worthy of honour. Yudhishthira Kounteya then again questioned the great sage Markandeya about the kingdoms that would flourish on this earth. "O foremost among eloquent ones! O sage! O Bhargava! We have heard from you about the extraordinary destruction and creation that occurs at the end of a yuga. I am extremely curious to learn about what happens in kali yuga. If all dharma is confounded then, what will remain? What energy will be left to men? What will they eat and how will they sport? How long will they live? What garments will they wear at the end of a yuga? After what period of time, will krita yuga arise again? O sage! Tell these varied accounts in detail." At these words, the supreme among sages began to speak again. The great rishi wished to please the tiger among the Vrishnis and the Pandavas.

'Markandeya said, "O bull among the Bharata lineage! Listen to me. I will tell you about the future of all the worlds when the time of evil arrives. In the time of krita with its four feet,[102] everything was devoid of deceit and obstructions. In those earlier times, dharma was established among humans, like a bull. In treta, adharma took away one leg, but it was still established on three feet. In dvapara, it is said that dharma and its opposite are mixed half and half. But at that time,[103] three-quarters of adharma will be established in the world. Only one quarter of dharma will be established among men. O Pandava! Learn from me that life with valour, intelligence, strength and power will shrink among men, following the change in yuga. O Yudhishthira! Kings, brahmanas, vaishyas and shudras will only pretend to practise dharma. Men will be deceitful about dharma. Men in the world will be vain about their learning and will abbreviate the truth. Because truth will be destroyed, lifespans will be shortened. Because of this shortening in life, it will not be possible to acquire much learning. Uninstructed and lacking in knowledge, ignorance will make them a prey to greed. Men will be addicted to avarice, anger and desire, and will be stupid. They will bear enmity and will wish to kill each other. Brahmanas, kshatriyas and vaishyas will consort with each other and become the equal of shudras, devoid of austerities and truth. There is no doubt that the lowest will rise to the middle and the middle will sink to the bottom. At the end of the

yuga, this will be the state of the world. Garments made of hemp will be considered to be the best. Grain eaten by the poor will be considered to be the best harvest. At the destruction of the yuga, men will consider their wives to be their enemies. They will live on fish and will milk goats and sheep. At the destruction of the yuga, men will destroy cows. Men will be against each other and will commit violence against each other. At the time of the destruction of the yuga, they will not meditate and will be atheists. They will dig up the banks of rivers with spades and sow herbs there. But at the time of the destruction of the yuga, these will yield little fruit. Men who have always been firm in their vows at funeral ceremonies and sacrifices to the gods, will become addicted to greed and will thrive on each other. The father will enjoy what belongs to the son and the son will enjoy what belongs to the father. At the time of the destruction of the yuga, rules about what should be eaten will be transgressed. Brahmanas will not observe vows and will criticize the Vedas. Deluded by their love for debate, they will not observe worship and sacrifices. Men will till lowlands and yoke milch cows. Men will employ calves that are one year old as beasts of burden. Though sons will kill their fathers and fathers will kill their sons, this will not be regarded as reprehensible. They will be without anxiety and will take great pride in this. The entire world will be overtaken by mleccha conduct. There will be no rites and sacrifices. There will be unhappiness everywhere and no festivities. Generally, men will rob the possessions of others, even of those who are weak and of their relatives and widows. There will be little valour and strength. There will be vanity. There will be addiction to avarice and delusion. Men will happily accept gifts given by the evil. They will accept them, themselves addicted to evil conduct. O Kounteya! Driven by evil intelligence, kings will hire assassins. The ignorant ones, thinking themselves to be wise, will seek to kill each other. When the destruction of the yuga is near, the kshatriyas will be the thorns of the world. They will not protect others. They will be greedy, insolent with pride and vanity. At the time of the destruction of the yuga, they will find delight in only resorting to chastisement. They will attack righteous ones and enjoy their wives and possessions. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! They will feel no pity, even when there are cries of grief. No one will ask for a maiden. No one will give a maiden away. When the end of the yuga is near, women will choose themselves. When the end of the yuga has arrived, kings, discontented with what they possess and deluded in their intelligence, will use every means possible to steal the property of others. There is no doubt that the entire world will be overtaken by mleccha ways. When the destruction of the yuga has arrived, one hand will steal from the other. In this world, men who are vain about their learning, will abbreviate the truth. The old will think like children and the children will have the intelligence of the old. Cowards will take pride in their bravery and the brave will be depressed as cowards. When the end of the yuga has arrived, they will not trust others. Overcome by greed and delusion, everyone will eat the same kind of food. Adharma will

extend and there will be no dharma. O lord of men! There will be no brahmanas, kshatriyas and vaishyas left. At the time of destruction of the yuga, the world will have only one varna. Fathers will not pardon their sons, nor sons their fathers. Wives will not tend to their husbands. When the end of the yuga has arrived, men will seek out cities and regions where barley and wheat are eaten. O lord of the earth! Men and women will eat whatever they wish. When the end of the yuga has arrived, they will not tolerate each other. O Yudhishthira! The entire world will be overtaken by mlecchas. Men will no longer satisfy their ancestors through funeral ceremonies. No one will listen to another. Nor will anyone be a preceptor. O lord of men! The entire world will be enveloped in terrible darkness. The greatest lifespan will be for sixteen years. At the time of the destruction of the yuga, this is when the breath of life will be released. Girls who are five or six years old will give birth. Boys who are seven or eight years old will beget children. O king! O tiger among kings! At that time, at the end of the yuga, women will not find satisfaction with their husbands, nor men with wives. There will be few possessions. Linga will be in vain.[104] There will be violence. At the time of the destruction of the yuga, no one will give to another. The countryside will be full of towers. The crossroads will be full of jackals. At the time of the destruction of the yuga, women will be full of hair. There will be cruel mleccha conduct everywhere. People will eat everything. They will be terrible in all their deeds. There is no doubt that men will be like this, when time comes to an end. At the time of buying and selling, everyone will steal everything from each other. O best of the Bharata lineage! At the end of the yuga, they will be driven by the love for riches. Though ignorant and without knowledge, they will perform rituals. When the end of the yuga has arrived, they will act as they wish. When the end of the yuga has arrived, all men will naturally be the performers of cruel deeds and will not trust each other. They will destroy trees and groves without a thought. There is no doubt that all beings in the world will find it difficult to ensure a living. O king! Overcome by avarice, they will roam the earth. They will become brahmanas and will enjoy the property of brahmanas. Oppressed by shudras,[105] brahmanas will be frightened and will lament. They will wander all over the earth, without anyone to protect them. Men will be cruel and terrible and will kill others. They will cause violence to beings. When men act in this fashion, the yuga will come to an end. O extender of the Kuru lineage! O king! Brahmanas, the supreme among brahmanas, will be oppressed by bandits and will swiftly flee in fear like crows, seeking refuge in rivers, mountains and uneven terrain, oppressed by the burden of taxes. O protector of the earth! At the time of the destruction of the yuga, they will discard all patience. They will perform deeds that should not be performed and will serve the shudras. The shudras will explain dharma to brahmanas and their servants and they will listen to these explanations and proofs. Everything in the world will be utterly upside down. Discarding the gods, collections of bones[106] will be worshipped. At the end of the

yuga, shudras will no longer serve brahmanas, in the hermitages of maharshis and in the residences of brahmanas. In places meant for the gods, in sanctuaries and in the abodes of the serpents, the earth will not be marked by abodes of the gods, but by collections of bones. When the yuga decays, these are the signs of the destruction of the yuga. Men will always become terrible, addicted to meat and liquor and weak in dharma. That is the time for the decay of the yuga. O king! At that time, flowers will be created in flowers and fruit in fruit. O great king! The yuga will decay t that time. When the rains shower down at the wrong time, the yuga will be over. The rituals of men will not follow the right order. Shudras[107] will quarrel with brahmanas. The earth will soon be infested with mleccha people. Overcome by the burden of taxation, brahmanas will flee in the ten directions. Without distinction, men in all countries will be oppressed by drought. They will resort to hermitages and live on fruits and roots. When the world is so turbulent, there will be no limits. Disciples will not heed their instructions, but will act in an unpleasant way. O sons! Preceptors will then have to live without any riches. Friends, kin and relatives will act only out of love for wealth. When the end of the yuga arrives, all beings will suffer from want. All the directions will blaze. All the constellations will move. All the stars will be adverse, all the winds will be turbulent. There will be many showers of meteors, indicative of great fear. The sun will torment with six others. There will be a thunderous noise and conflagrations in all the directions. From rising to setting, the sun will be obscured by the headless torso.[108] The illustrious one with the thousand eyes[109] will not rain at the right time. At the time of the end of the yuga, crops will not grow. Women will be harsh and cruel in speech and will love to cry. Women will not follow the words of their husbands. When the destruction of the yuga arrives, sons will kill their fathers and mothers. Women will kill their husbands and depend on their sons. O great king! Rahu will envelope the sun at the wrong time. When the end of the yuga arrives, fires will blaze up in all the directions. Travellers will ask for food and drink, but not receive it. They will not find shelter and will be thrown out. They will have to sleep on the road. When the end of the yuga is near, crows of ill omen, serpents, vultures, animals and birds will screech harshly. When the end of the yuga has arrived, men will be abandoned by their friends and relatives, kin and followers. When the end of the yuga has arrived, they will gradually seek refuge in other countries, regions, settlements and cities, with extremely terrible words of 'Alas, father!' and 'Alas, son!'. In extreme affliction, men will roam around. Then, when the terrible time of the destruction of the yuga is over, beings gradually come into existence, beginning with brahmanas. When that period is over, the world begins to prosper again. The gods again become favourable, as they desire. When the sun, the moon, Tishya[110] and Jupiter are in conjunction in the same sign of the zodiac, then krita begins again. Rains shower at the right time and the stars become favourable. The planets revolve in a

propitious way. Safety, abundance of food, health and recovery from disease are prevalent. Driven by time, a brahmana named Kalki Vishnuyasha will be born.[111] He will have great energy, great intelligence and valour. He will be born in a village named Sambhala, in an auspicious brahmana household. As soon as he thinks about it, all means of transport, weapons, warriors, missiles and armour will manifest themselves before him. He will be a king and emperor, triumphing on the basis of dharma. He will restore order in this turbulent world. When arisen, that radiant brahmana, immensely intelligent, will bring an end to the destruction by destroying everything. He will initiate the yuga.[112] Wherever he goes, he will be surrounded by brahmanas. That brahmana will then uproot the mean masses of mlecchas, wherever they may happen to be.'"

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'Markandeya said, "After exterminating the rakshasas, he will hand over the earth to the brahmanas at a great horse sacrifice. Having established the sacred limits decreed by the self-creating one,[113] the performer of holy and famous deeds will retire to the forest when he attains old age. The men who live in the world will follow his good conduct. When thieves and rakshasas have been exterminated by the brahmanas, there will be safety again. When all the countries have been conquered, that tiger among brahmanas will establish black antelope skins, spears and tridents and other weapons there.[114] He will be praised by the Indras among brahmanas and will honour them in return. Kalki, supreme among brahmanas will roam around the earth, always engaged in the killing of *dasyus*.[115] When he exterminates dasyus, terrible lamentations of 'Alas, father!' and 'Alas, son!' will be heard. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! When krita has arrived, adharma will thus be destroyed and dharma will flourish. People will again follow rituals. There will be groves, sanctuaries, large ponds, temples and many sacrifices and rituals on the arrival of krita yuga. Brahmanas will be righteous and hermits will be ascetics. Hermitages, earlier occupied by wretches, will have subjects engaged in truth. All the seeds sown will begin to grow. O Indra among kings! Every crop will grow in every season. Men will be devoted to donations, vows and rites. Brahmanas will happily be engaged in meditation and sacrifices and will desire dharma. Kings will govern the earth in accordance with the principles of dharma. In krita yuga, vaishyas will be engaged in trade, brahmanas in their six tasks[116] and kshatriyas in offering protection. Shudras will devote themselves to servitude of the three varnas. This will be the nature of dharma in krita yuga, treta and dvapara and in the last period of the yuga. I have recounted this to you. O Pandava! The numbers of the yugas are known to all the worlds. Thus have I told you everything about the past and the future, as I remember it. This is the Purana recounted by Vayu, lauded by the rishis.[117] Though I am immortal, I

have witnessed and experienced many courses of life in the world.[118] I have told you about them.

'"O one without decay! Now, with your brothers, listen to these other words of mine. They will free you from your doubts about dharma. O supreme among those who uphold dharma! Always unite your soul with dharma. O king! Those who have dharma in their soul enjoy bliss, here and in the hereafter. O unblemished one! Listen to the auspicious words that I will now tell you. In the course of your acts, you should never oppress a brahmana. If angered, a brahmana can destroy the world through his oath."'

Vaishampayana said, 'Having heard Markandeya's words, the king, supreme among Kurus, replied in these words to the immensely wise and immensely radiant one. "O sage! If I wish to protect my subjects, what dharma should I follow? How should I act, so that I do not deviate from my own dharma?"

'Markandeya replied, "Be compassionate towards all beings and try to ensure their welfare, without hatred. Be engaged in the protection of your subjects, as if they are your own children. Practise dharma and avoid adharma. Worship the ancestors and the gods. If you act out of ignorance, neutralize it by offering the right donations. Discard vanity and always be humble. Conquer the entire earth and remain in joy and happiness. This is dharma as it was, and as it will be. There is nothing in the past or the future that is not known to you. O son![119] Therefore, do not suffer because of your present misfortune. O mighty-armed one! Destiny is superior to all the gods too. Prodded by destiny, all beings are afflicted. O unblemished one! Do not have any doubts about what I have told you. If you doubt my words, your dharma will be destroyed. O bull among the Bharata lineage! You have been born in the famous lineage of the Kurus. You should practise everything in deed, thought and speech."

'Yudhishthira said, "O best of brahmanas! The words that you have uttered are pleasant to hear. O lord! I will endeavour to act according to your instructions. O Indra among brahmanas! I have no greed, no fear and no envy. O lord! I will do everything that you have told me."'

Vaishampayana said, 'O king! Having heard the words of the great-souled Pandava, all the Pandavas, together with the wielder of the Sharnga bow, were delighted.[120] Having heard the words of the intelligent Markandeya about the ancient accounts, they were struck with great wonder.'

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Vaishampayana said, 'Pandava then spoke to Markandeya. "Tell me about the greatness of brahmanas." Markandeya replied.[121]

'"There was a king in Ayodhya, from the Ikshvaku lineage. His name was Parikshit and he went out hunting. Pursuing a deer alone on a horse, he travelled a long distance.

On the way, he became exhausted, hungry and thirsty. In that part of the country, he saw a dark and dense cluster of trees. He entered the cluster of trees and in the middle, saw an extremely beautiful pond. He and his horse bathed there. He flung some lotus stalks in front of the horse.[122] Then, refreshed, he sat down on the banks of the pond. While he was lying there, he heard the sweet sound of singing. On hearing this, he began to wonder. 'I do not see the marks of any humans here. What singing is this then?' He then saw an extremely beautiful maiden, worthy of looking at. She was picking flowers and singing and wandered around to where the king was. The king said, 'O fortunate one! Whose are you?' The maiden replied, 'I am a virgin.' The king said, 'I wish that you should be mine.' The maiden replied, 'I can only be yours if you take an oath.' The king wanted to know what the condition was and the maiden replied, 'You must never show me water.' The king agreed to these words and having agreed, won her and sat down with her. While the king was thus seated, his soldiers arrived there. They had followed his footsteps. On seeing the king, they established themselves around him. Having fully recovered, the king mounted a palanquin with her and returned to his city. He pleasured there with her privately, out of sight of anyone.

'"The prime minister then asked the women who waited on the king. 'What is happening?' The women replied, 'We have seen something that we have not seen before. No water is brought here.' Having heard this, the minister constructed a grove. It had beautiful trees, with many roots, flowers and fruit. But it had no water. He went to the king in private and said, 'There is a beautiful grove without any water. Pleasure yourself happily there.' On hearing these words, the king entered the grove with the queen. One day, he was roaming in that wonderful grove with his beloved and became exhausted, hungry and thirsty. He saw a wonderful cluster of *atimuktas*.[123] On entering it with his beloved, the king saw a pond with clear water, covered by the creepers. As soon as he saw it, he sat down on its banks with his queen. The king told the queen, 'Let us descend into the water of this pond.' On hearing these words, she got down and immersed herself in the pond. But she did not surface again. The king searched for her, but could not find her. He had the water taken out and found a frog seated near the mouth of a hole. The angry king passed an order. 'Kill all frogs. Whoever wishes to see me, has to come with a dead frog as a tribute.' When this terrible destruction of the frogs continued, all the frightened frogs went to the king of the frogs and told him what was happening. Then the king of the frogs adopted the disguise of an ascetic and went to the king. Having approached, he said, 'O king! Do not be overcome by anger. Have mercy and do not destroy the innocent frogs. There are two shlokas on this. "Do not wish to kill all frogs. O unblemished one! Control your anger. People who are ignorant, destroy their extensive prosperity. Promise that when you meet them, you will control your wrath. Why must you continue with this adharma? What purpose will dead frogs serve?"' But the king's soul was overcome with grief for his beloved and he told the frog,

‘I cannot forgive. I will kill those evil-souled ones who have devoured my beloved. The frogs deserve to be killed by me. O learned one! Do not try to obstruct me.’ On hearing these words, his senses and mind were pained and he replied, ‘O king! Show mercy. I am the king of the frogs and my name is Ayu. She was my daughter, named Sushobhana. She has this bad character and she has deceived many kings earlier.’ The king replied, ‘I desire her. Give her to me.’ The father bestowed her on the king, with the words, ‘Serve the king.’ He also told his daughter, ‘Since you have deceived many kings and have committed falsehood, your sons will be the haters of brahmanas.’ Having obtained her, the king’s heart was set on the pleasures of making love. It was as if he had won the wealth of the three worlds. He prostrated himself before the king of the frogs and in a voice choking with tears of joy, said, ‘You have favoured me a lot.’ Having bid farewell to his son-in-law, the king of frogs went away, to where he had come from.

‘“After some time, the king had three sons through her. Their names were Shala, Dala and Bala. After some time, since his soul was set on austerities, the king instated the eldest Shala on the throne and left for the forest. One day, Shala went out hunting. He saw a deer and pursued it on his chariot. He told the charioteer, ‘Drive me faster.’ The charioteer replied to the king, ‘Do not insist on this course of action. You would have been able to catch the deer only if Vamya horses had been yoked to the chariot.’ The king then told the charioteer, ‘Tell me about Vamya horses. Otherwise, I will kill you.’ Having been thus addressed by the king, he was frightened of the king’s anger, as well as of Vamadeva’s curse, and said, ‘Vamya horses are those that belong to Vamadeva. They are as swift as the mind.’ On hearing this, the king told him, ‘Go to Vamadeva’s hermitage.’ Having gone to Vamadeva’s hermitage, he told the rishi, ‘O illustrious one! I pierced a deer and it has run away. You should give me a couple of Vamya horses so that I can catch it.’ The rishi replied, ‘I will give you the Vamyas. But when you have finished, you must return them immediately.’ Having accepted the horses and having taken the rishi’s permission, he yoked the Vamya horses to his chariot and pursued the deer. But when he was travelling, he told the charioteer, ‘These horses are gems. They do not deserve to be possessed by a brahmana. I am not going to return them to Vamadeva.’ Having thus spoken, he caught the deer. He returned to his city and lodged the horses in the inner quarters of the palace. The rishi thought, ‘This prince is young. Having obtained these excellent horses, he is enjoying them. He will not return them to me. What a nuisance!’ Having thought this, when a month had passed, he told his disciple. ‘O Atreya! Go to the king and tell him that if he is through with the horses, he should return the Vamyas to your preceptor.’ He went and told the king. But the king replied, ‘These horses deserve to be possessed by kings. Brahmanas do not deserve such gems. What will brahmanas do with horses? Return.’ Returning, he told this to the preceptor.

'"On hearing these unpleasant words, Vamadeva was filled with anger. He himself went to the king and asked for his horses. But the king refused. Vamadeva said, 'O king! Return the Vamya horses to me. You have undertaken a deed that others cannot accomplish. Varuna will kill you with his terrible noose. You are trying to create a split between brahmanas and kshatriyas.' The king replied, 'O Vamadeva! These two bulls have been trained well and are docile. They are the appropriate mount for a brahmana. O maharshi! Take them and go wherever you want. The chants themselves bear someone like you.'[124] Vamadeva said, 'O king! The chants indeed bear someone like me, but that is in the next world. O king! In this world, these are my mounts, and for others who are like me.' The king replied, 'Then let four donkeys bear you. They are excellent. Or there are fleet horses. Use those. But these Vamyas deserve to be possessed by a kshatriya like me. Behold. They cannot belong to you.' Vamadeva said, 'It has been said that a brahmana's vow is terrible. O king! If I have lived by such vows, then terrible giants with bodies made of iron and holding sharp spears will slice you into four parts.' The king replied, 'O Vamadeva! Let those who bear sharp spears know that you, a brahmana, are willing to kill in speech, thought and deeds. On my instructions, let them kill you, with your disciple.' Vamadeva said, 'O king! A brahmana can never be chastised, in speech, thought and deeds. But one who is learned in the brahman and has practised austerities, can prove superior to the best in this world.' O king! When Vamadeva spoke these words, rakshasas arose, terrible in form. With raised spears, they rushed towards the king, so as to kill him. In a loud voice, he cried out, 'O brahmana! Even if all the Ikshvakus, Dala and the vaishyas who are ruled by me tell me, I will not give up the Vamyas. O Vamadeva! They are not ones who follow dharma.' While he was still speaking, the yatudhanas[125] struck the lord of the earth and he fell down on the ground.

'"On learning that the king had been killed, the Ikshvakus instated Dala on the throne. Brahmana Vamadeva then went to the kingdom and spoke these words to King Dala. 'O king! It has been said in all dharma that gifts must be given to brahmanas. O Indra among kings! If you fear to transgress dharma, immediately give the Vamyas to me.' Having heard these words of Vamadeva, the king was angered and spoke to his charioteer. 'Bring me one of those beautiful and poisonous arrows that have been carefully kept. Pierced by it, Vamadeva will lie down prone on the ground in pain and dogs will tear him apart.' Vamadeva said, 'I know that you have a son who is ten years old. O Indra among kings! He has been born from your queen Shyenajit. Urged by my words, you will soon kill that beloved son with your terrible arrows.' O king! Thus instructed by Vamadeva, that arrow, fiery in power, killed the prince in the inner quarters of the palace, as soon as it had been released by Dala. On hearing this, the king said, 'O Ikshvakus! I will perform a pleasant task for you. I will kill this brahmana today. Bring me another of my fiery arrows. O lords of the earth! Witness my valour

now.’ Vamadeva replied, ‘O Indra among men! This is a terrible and poisonous arrow. You have aimed it at me. But you will not be able to aim or shoot.’ The king said, ‘O Ikshvakus! Behold. I am unable to release the arrow that I have grasped. I will not be able to perform the task of killing him. Let Vamadeva live and may he have a long life.’ Vamadeva said, ‘Touch the queen with this arrow and you will be freed from your sin.’ The king did as he had been asked to and the princess spoke to the sage. ‘O Vamadeva! O brahmana! If I have honoured my husband and have lain down with him day after day, let me be able to serve brahmanas and attain the sacred worlds after death.’ Vamadeva said, ‘O one with the beautiful eyes! You have saved the king’s lineage. Ask for an unequalled boon and I will give it to you. O princess! O unblemished one! Rule over your relatives and this extensive kingdom of the Ikshvakus.’ The princess said, ‘O illustrious one! I ask for the boon that my husband should now be freed from his sin. May you bless him, with his sons and relatives. O foremost among brahmanas! This is the boon that I want.’ On hearing the princess’s words, the sage said that it would be that way. At that, the king was extremely happy. He bowed in obeisance and returned the Vamyas.”’

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Vaishampayana said, ‘The rishis and the Pandavas again asked Markandeya, “Is there anyone who has a longer life than you?”

‘He told them, “Yes, there is a rajarshi named Indradyumna. When his merits were exhausted, he fell down from heaven, exclaiming, ‘My deeds have been lost.’[126] He came to me and asked me whether I knew him. I told him, ‘We are not chemists.[127] We pursue our goals by tormenting our bodies and minds. We do not perform acts for the sake of wealth. There is an owl in the Himalayas by the name of Prakarakarna. He may know you.’ But the Himalayas where he lives, is a long distance away from here. He became a horse and carried me to the place where the owl was. Then the rajarshi asked it, ‘Do you know me?’ It reflected for some time and then said, ‘No. I do not know you.’ Hearing these words, rajarshi Indradyumna again spoke to the owl. ‘Is there anyone who has a longer life than you?’ The owl replied, ‘There is a lake by the name of Indradyumna. A crane named Nadijangha lives there and he is older than we are.[128] Ask him.’ Indradyumna then took me and the owl to the lake where the crane named Nadijangha lived. We asked it, ‘Do you know the king named Indradyumna?’ It thought for a while and replied, ‘No. I do not know King Indradyumna.’ We asked it, ‘Is there anyone who has had a longer life than you?’ It replied, ‘There is a tortoise named Akupura who lives in this lake. He is older than I am.’ We replied, ‘Perhaps he knows about this king. Let us ask Akupura.’ The crane then spoke to the tortoise Akupura. ‘We need to ask you something. Please be kind enough to come to us.’ Hearing this, the tortoise emerged from the lake and came to where we were standing, on the banks of

the lake. When it came, we asked it, 'Do you know of this king named Indradyumna?' It thought for some time and then its eyes were filled with tears. Its heart was agitated and it trembled. It almost lost its senses. Then it joined its limbs in salutation and said, 'How can I not know that king? In earlier times, when kindling the sacrificial fire, he erected sacrificial stakes one thousand times.[129] This lake was created from the hooves of cattle he gave away as gifts. I have lived here ever since then.' As soon as we heard these words of the tortoise, a celestial chariot descended from the world of the gods and words were heard about Indradyumna. 'Heaven is ready for you. That is your appropriate place. Your deeds are great. Go there in a cheerful frame of mind. The words about sacred deeds touch the heaven and the earth. As long as there is sound, so long does man live. Whenever a being's evil deeds are recounted on earth, he descends to the inferior worlds as long as those words are recounted. Therefore, right till the end, any man on earth should be engaged in good deeds. He should avoid evil conduct and seek refuge in dharma.' On hearing this, the king replied, 'Wait until I have returned these seniors to the places I brought them from.' He brought me and the owl Prakarakarna to our usual places. Then he returned in that chariot to the place that was appropriate for him. Though I have a long life, this is what I have witnessed." This is what Markandeya told the Pandavas.

'The Pandavas happily said, "That was proper. You did the right thing in restoring King Indradyumna to heaven again, when he had fallen from the world of heaven." He replied, "Devaki's son Krishna also saved rajarshi Nriga, when he had descended into hell and was in distress. He returned him again to heaven."'[130]

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Vaishampayana said, 'O bull among the Bharata lineage! Dharmaraja Yudhishthira again asked Markandeya, without sin, old in his austerities and with a long life. "O one learned in dharma! You know about the gods, the danavas and the rakshasas, the various lineages of kings and the eternal lineages of the rishis. O supreme among brahmanas! There is nothing in this world that is unknown to you. O sage! You know about the celestial stories of men, serpents and rakshasas. O brahmana! The famous Kuvalashva was born in the unvanquished lineage of the Ikshvakus. I wish to hear the details about why his name was changed to Dhundhumara. O best among the Bhargava lineage! I wish to learn about this. What was the reason why the wise Kuvalashva's name was changed?"

'Markandeya replied, "O King Yudhishthira! I will tell you the story. Listen. The account of Dhundhumara is full of dharma. O lord of the earth! Listen to it, how King Kuvalashva of the Ikshvaku lineage, lord of the earth, became Dhundhumara. O son![131] O descendant of the Bharata lineage! There was a famous maharshi by the name of Utanka. O Kourava! He had his beautiful hermitage in the desert regions. O great king!

Wishing to worship Vishnu, the lord Utanka performed difficult austerities for a large number of years. Pleased with him, the illustrious and worthy one himself appeared before him. As soon as he saw him, the rishi prostrated himself and praised him with many hymns. 'O god! All beings, with the gods, the asuras and men, and all mobile and immobile objects, have been created by you. O immensely radiant one! Brahma, the Vedas and all that is capable of being learnt has been created by you. O god! The heaven is your head. Your eyes are the moon and the sun. O one without decay! The wind is your breath. The fire is your energy. All the directions are your arms. The great ocean is your stomach. O god! The mountains are your thighs. O Madhusudana! The sky is your navel. The goddess earth is your feet. The herbs are your body hair. Indra, Soma, Agni, Varuna, the gods, the asuras and the great serpents bow down before you and praise you with many hymns. O lord of the earth! You permeate all beings. The immensely powerful practitioners of yoga and the maharshis praise you. When you are satisfied, the universe is at peace. But when you are angered, there is great fear. O supreme among beings! You alone are the dispeller of all fear. You are the cause of happiness to gods, humans and all beings. O god! Through three strides, you covered the three worlds. The prosperity of the asuras was destroyed by you. Through your valour, the gods attained supreme bliss. O immensely radiant one! It was your wrath that vanquished the Indras among the daityas. You are the creator and the destroyer of all beings. Worshipping you, all the gods attain happiness.'

'"Having been thus praised by the great-souled Utanka, Vishnu Hrishikesha spoke to Utanka. 'I am pleased with you. Ask for a boon.' Utanka replied, 'It is already enough of a boon that I have seen Hari, the eternal being, the divine lord who is the creator of the universe.' Vishnu said, 'O supreme among brahmanas! I am pleased with your steadfastness and your devotion. O brahmana! O twice-born one! But you must accept a boon from me.' O supreme among the Bharata lineage! Thus instructed by Hari to ask for a boon, Utanka joined his hands in salutation and asked for a boon. 'O lord! O one with the lotus eyes! O great lord! If you are pleased with me, let my mind always be fixed on dharma, truth and self-control, eternally, and let me always be devoted to you.' Visnu replied, 'O brahmana! Through my favours, all this will happen. A yoga will manifest itself in you. United with it, you will accomplish a great task for the dwellers of heaven and the three worlds. A great asura named Dhundhu is now performing terrible austerities for the destruction of the worlds. Listen. I will tell you who will kill him. There will be a famous king by the name of Brihadashva. He will have an obedient and sacred son, known by the name of Kuvalashva. O brahmana rishi! On your instructions, this best of kings will use my powers of yoga and become Dhundhumara.'[132] Having thus spoken to Utanka, Vishnu disappeared."'

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‘Markandeya said, “O king! When Ikshvaku died, Shashada became the king of Ayodhya and obtained the earth. He had the greatest dharma in his soul. Shashada had a valorous son named Kakutstha. Kakutstha’s son was Anenas and Anenas’s was Prithu. Prithu’s son was Vishvagashva and Vishvagashva begot the wise Ardra. His son was Yuvanashva and his son was Shravasta. King Shravasta built Shravasti.[133] Shravasta’s son was the immensely strong Brihadashva and Kuvalashva is known as Brihadashva’s son. Kuvalashva had twenty-one thousand sons. All of them were learned, powerful and unassailable. Kuvalashva surpassed his father in all the qualities. O great king! In due course of time, Brihadashva instated the supremely brave Kuvalashva, who was always immersed in dharma, in the kingdom. Having handed over the prosperity to his son, the wise king Brihadashva, the destroyer of his enemies, went to a hermitage to practise austerities. O king! O Yudhishthira! Utanka, supreme among brahmanas, heard that rajarshi Brihadashva had left for the forest. Then the immensely energetic Utanka, limitless in his soul, went to that supreme among men, foremost among those who were skilled in the use of all weapons. He tried to restrain him.

‘“Utanka said, ‘O king! It is your duty to protect and you should perform that duty. It is through your favours that we live without anxiety. O king! Protected by a great-souled one like you, we will be without anxiety. Therefore, you should not depart for the forest. Great dharma can be seen in protecting the subjects. That cannot be seen in the forest. Therefore, give up such an inclination. O Indra among kings! There is no dharma that can be seen, which is like protecting the subjects. This is what rajarshis have practised earlier. Protect the subjects, as they should be protected by the king. O king! Else, I will not be able to perform my austerities without anxiety. There is a desert region near my hermitage and there is an ocean of sand known by the name of Ujjanaka. It is many yojanas long and many yojanas wide. An extremely valorous, powerful and terrible Indra among the danavas dwells there. He is the son of Madhu and Kaitabha and this extremely terrible one has the name of Dhundhu.[134] O king! This infinitely valorous one lives under the ground. O great king! Kill him and then go to the forest. He lies there, engaged in terrible austerities for the sake of destroying the world. O king! He will destroy the thirty gods and the world. He cannot be killed by the gods, the daityas, the rakshasas, the nagas, the yakshas or any of the gandharvas. O king! He has obtained such a boon from the grandfather of all the worlds. Destroy him and be fortunate. Do not have any other resolution. Achieve a great deed and attain eternal and undecaying fame. That cruel one sleeps under the sand. He breathes at the end of the year. At that time, the entire earth, with its mountains, forests and groves, begins to tremble. His breath raises a great cloud of dust that obstructs the path of the sun. The earth trembles for seven days. There are sparks and flames, mixed with terrible smoke. O king! It is for this reason that I cannot remain in my own hermitage. O Indra among kings! Therefore, destroy him for the welfare of the worlds. When this asura has been killed, the worlds

will be healthy again. I think that you are quite capable of destroying him. Your energy will be increased by Vishnu's energy. Earlier, Vishnu gave me a boon for his destruction. Whichever king kills that terrible and great asura, will be united with Vishnu's own unassailable energy. O Indra among kings! Accept that energy, which the earth finds difficult to bear. O protector of the earth! The immensely energetic Dhundhu cannot be killed by someone who has limited energy, even if he tries for a hundred years.'"'

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'Markandeya said, "O best of Kouravas! Having been thus addressed by Utanka, the unvanquished rajarshi joined his hands in salutation and said, 'O brahmana! Your arrival will not be in vain. O illustrious one! I have a son, known by the name of Kuvalashva. He is intelligent and swift to act. His valour is unmatched on earth. There is no doubt that he will accomplish that which is pleasant for you. He is surrounded by his brave sons, all of whom have arms like clubs. O brahmana! Please give me permission to leave, since I have discarded all weapons.' Having been thus addressed, the infinitely energetic sage agreed. The rajarshi directed his son to the great-souled Utanka. Having done this, he went to an excellent forest."

'Yudhishthira asked, "O illustrious one! O one rich in austerities! Who was this immensely valorous daitya? Whose son was he and whose grandson? I wish to know all this. O one rich in austerities! I have not heard of this immensely strong daitya. O illustrious one! O immensely wise one! O one rich in austerities! I wish to know everything in detail, the way it occurred."

'Markandeya said, "O king! O lord of men! Listen to it, exactly the way it happened. O bull among the Bharata lineage! When the world became one terrible ocean and all mobile and immobile objects and all beings had been destroyed, the illustrious Vishnu, the eternal and undecaying being, the source of everything in the world, slept alone on the ocean. He was stretched out on the great serpent Shesha, whose energy is limitless. O illustrious one! The immensely fortunate Hari, the undecaying one and the creator of the world, slept in the coils of that great serpent, which encircled the expanse of the earth. While the god was thus asleep, a lotus sprouted from his navel and it was the equal of the sun in its radiance. From that lotus, which was like the sun and the moon in its splendour, emerged grandfather Brahma himself, the preceptor of the worlds. He is the four Vedas, with four forms and four faces. He is extremely strong and valorous and is unassailable because of his powers.

'"Once upon a time, the supremely brave danavas, Madhu and Kaitabha, saw the immensely radiant lord Hari, asleep on his celestial bed in the coils of the serpent, which was many yojanas long and many yojanas wide. He wore a diadem and the Koustubha gem.[135] He was attired in a yellow garment made of silk. O king! He blazed in his radiance, energy and beauty, equal to the extraordinary sight of a thousand suns.

Madhu and Kaitabha were extremely surprised to see the lotus-eyed grandfather on the lotus. They tried to terrify the infinitely energetic Brahma. Repeatedly terrified by those two, the immensely famous Brahma shook the stalk of the lotus and Keshava woke up. Govinda saw those powerful danavas. On seeing them, the god said, 'O immensely strong ones! You are welcome. I am pleased with you. Ask for the best of boons.' O great king! Those two great asuras were extremely brave and began to laugh at Hrishikesha. They replied to Madhusudana, 'O supreme among gods! O god! We are the ones who grant boons. Ask for a boon from us. Without hesitation, ask for a boon and we will grant it to you.' The lord said, 'O brave ones! I will accept a boon from you. Grant me the boon that I desire. Both of you are endowed with great valour and there is no man who is your equal. O ones for whom truth is valour! I wish to kill you for the welfare of the world. Grant me the boon that this desire to kill you is satisfied.' Madhu and Kaitabha replied, 'O supreme among beings! We have never uttered a falsehood before, not even in jest. We have always been steadfast in our devotion to dharma and truth. There is no one who is our equal in strength, beauty, valour, tranquility, dharma, austerities, generosity, conduct, power and self-control. O Keshava! A great calamity confronts us. But do what you have said. It is impossible to overcome destiny. O god! O lord! O supreme among the best of the gods! But there is one thing that we wish you to do. You must kill us in a spot that is completely uncovered.[136] O one with the beautiful eyes! We will become your sons. O god! O supreme among gods! Know that this is the boon that we ask for.' The illustrious one replied, 'It shall be that way. Everything will happen the way you have stated.' Then Govinda thought, but he could not see any spot that was uncovered. When Madhusudana could not find such a spot in heaven and earth, the supreme god glanced at his own uncovered thighs. O king! Madhusudana then sliced off the heads of Madhu and Kaitabha, with the end of his sharp and terrible chakra."'[137]

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'Markandeya said, "They[138] had an immensely energetic and immensely radiant son by the name of Dhundhu. He had great energy and valour and performed austerities. He stood on one leg and became so thin that he was held together by his veins. Brahma was pleased with him and gave him the boon that he asked for from that lord. He asked, 'I should be incapable of being killed by gods, danavas, yakshas, serpents, gandharvas and rakshasas.' The grandfather told him that it would be that way. Having been thus addressed, he touched his[139] feet with his head and departed.

""Thus, after obtaining the boon, Dhundhu became immensely valorous and powerful. He remembered the killing of his fathers and went to Vishnu. The violent Dhundhu defeated all the gods and the gandharvas. He then began to cruelly oppress all the gods,

together with Vishnu. O bull among the Bharata lineage! There is an ocean of sand known by the name of Ujjanaka. The evil-minded one went to that region. O lord! He oppressed, with all his strength, Utanka's hermitage. He entered the interior of the earth and hid in the sand. Dhundhu, Madhu and Kaitabha's fearful and powerful son, sought to obtain the strength of austerities, so that he could destroy the world. Near Utanka's hermitage, his breath was flames of fire. At this time, King Kuvalashva went to Dhundhu's residence, with his servants, soldiers and mounts. He was accompanied by his twenty-one thousand sons, the destroyers of enemies, and by Utanka. On Utanka's request, the illustrious Vishnu injected the lord with his energy, for the welfare of the worlds. When the invincible one started out, a loud voice was heard from heaven. 'This handsome one will become Dhundhumara.' The gods showered down celestial flowers in all directions. The kettledrums of the gods began to sound on their own. While the wise one proceeded, a cool wind began to blow. The lord of the gods showered down, removing dust from the earth. O Yudhishthira! Just above the spot where the great asura Dhundhu was, the vimanas of the gods appeared in the sky. The gods, together with the gandharvas and the maharshis, assembled, curious to witness the battle between Kuvalashva and Dhundhu.

'"O Kouravya! Invigorated with Narayana's energy, the king swiftly advanced in all the directions, together with his sons. King Kuvalashva had that ocean of sand dug up. When Kuvalashva's sons dug up that ocean of sand, after seven days, they saw the immensely strong Dhundhu. O bull among the Bharata lineage! His terrible body was buried in the sand. It blazed like the energy of the sun. O great king! O tiger among kings! Dhundhu was asleep, covering the western direction with effulgence that was like the fire of destruction. Surrounded by his sons, Kuvalashva assaulted him with sharp arrows, clubs, maces, battleaxes, bludgeons and swords that were sharp and bright. Having been thus attacked, the immensely strong one was angered and arose. He wrathfully swallowed up the different types of weapons. He vomited flames from his mouth, like the fire of destruction. He burnt down all the sons of the king with his energy. O tiger among kings! In an instant, the angry one was about to consume the worlds with the flames issuing from his mouth, just as the lord Kapila had done earlier, when he had angrily burnt down the sons of Sagara.[140] It was extremely wonderful. O supreme among the Bharata lineage! When they had been burnt down in this way, the immensely energetic King Kuvalashva approached the great-souled one, who was like Kumbhakarna awakened.[141] O great king! O king! A great flow of water issued from the body of the king and this water doused the flames. Just as a practitioner of yoga uses yoga, the water pacified the flames. O best of the Bharata lineage! Then the king burnt down the cruel and powerful daitya with his brahmastra and ensured the welfare of all the worlds. Rajarshi Kuvalashva consumed the great asura with this weapon. That destroyer of enemies killed the enemy of the gods and became like the lord of the three

worlds. From that day, he became known as Dhundhumara.

'"Then the thirty gods, together with all the maharshis, were delighted. They wished to grant him a boon. O king! Extremely delighted, he joined his hands in salutation, prostrated himself and spoke these words. 'Grant me the boon that I may donate my riches to the best of the brahmanas and that I may be invincible against my enemies. May I enjoy friendship with Vishnu and may I not exhibit enmity towards any being. May my mind always be devoted to dharma and may I have an eternal abode in heaven.' The delighted gods, together with the rishis, the gandharvas and the intelligent Utanka, told the king that it would be that way. After pronouncing various other auspicious benedictions on the king, the gods and the maharshis returned to their abodes. O Yudhishthira! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The king had three sons left and their names were Dhridhashva, Kapilashva and Chandrashva. O king! The great-souled lineage of the Ikshvakus followed from them. O virtuous one! Thus did Kuvalashva kill the immensely valorous daitya Dhundhu, the son of Madhu and Kaitabha. From that day, King Kuvalashva has been known as Dhundhumara. Named thus, he became associated with many qualities. I have told you everything that you asked, famous as the account of Dhundhumara and his exploits. This sacred account is associated with Vishnu's praise. The man who listens to this, has dharma in his soul and begets sons. By listening to it on full moon days or days of the new moon,[142] one obtains a long life, becomes persevering, has no fear of disease and is devoid of afflictions."'

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Vaishampayana said, 'O best of the Bharata lineage! Then King Yudhishthira asked the immensely radiant Markandeya an extremely difficult question about dharma.

'"O illustrious one![143] O brahmana! I wish to hear about the supreme greatness of women. Tell me the details about the subtleties of dharma. O brahmana rishi! O foremost one! The sun, the moon, the wind, the earth and the fire seem to be gods to me. O illustrious one! O great one! O descendant of the Bhrigu lineage! So are the father, the mother, the cow and whatever else has been ordained. All of these have to be revered as preceptors and I look upon devoted wives in the same way. It seems to me that devotion to husbands and serving them must be very difficult. O lord! If you so wish, please tell me about the greatness of devotion to husbands. O unblemished one! Restraining the senses and controlling the mind, it must be very difficult to continuously think of husbands as gods. O illustrious one! O lord! This seems to me to be extremely difficult. O brahmana! The serving of the father, the mother and the husband by women and the dharma of womanhood seem to be extremely terrible and difficult to me. O brahmana! Faithful women are always devoted in their conduct. But this must be difficult, as are acts towards the father and the mother. There are women who are

devoted to one single person and speak the truth. They bear an embryo in the womb for a full ten months. What can be more wonderful than that? They bear great difficulties and immense pain. O lord! They give birth to sons after great pain. O supreme among brahmanas! Then they rear them with great affection. I also think that those who perform cruel deeds and are abhorred for that, but always continue to perform them, must find it very difficult. O brahmana! Tell me in detail about the dharma of kshatriyas. O brahmana! Dharma must be difficult for a cruel and evil-minded one. O illustrious one! You are supreme among those who know the answers to questions. O best among those of the Bhrigu lineage! O one who maintains good vows! I wish to hear the answer to my question."

'Markandeya replied, "O best among the Bharata lineage! Yes, I will tell you everything about this extremely difficult question of yours. Pay attention to my words. O son![144] Some hold the mother to be superior, others the father.[145] However, the mother performs the most difficult task, she propagates the species. Through austerities, worshipping the gods, endurance and resorting to magical spells, fathers desire sons. O brave one! After undergoing such great difficulties, one obtains a son, difficult to obtain, and one wonders about what this son will end up doing. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! A father and a mother wish for fame, deeds, wealth, prosperity, offspring and dharma for the son, a son who will make their desires successful and be devoted to dharma, one who will bring satisfaction to the father and the mother and will attain eternal fame and dharma in this world and the next. O Indra among kings! But a woman does not need sacrifices, funeral ceremonies or fasting. When she serves her husband, she obtains heaven. O king! O Yudhishthira! On this, listen attentively to the dharma of those who are devoted to their husbands."'

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'Markandeya said, "O descendant of the Bharata lineage! There was a foremost among brahmanas by the name of Koushika. He studied the Vedas and was rich in austerities. He was an ascetic and followed dharma in his conduct. That supreme among brahmanas studied the Vedas, together with the Angas and the Upanishads.[146] One day, he was under a tree and was reciting the Vedas. A female crane was perched on the tree. At that time, it dropped some excrement on the brahmana. The brahmana was angered. Overcome by anger, he directed a terrible stare at the crane and injured by the brahmana, it fell down on the ground. On seeing that the crane had fallen down, bereft of its senses, the brahmana was overcome by compassion and regret. 'Overcome by the force of passion and hatred, I have done that which I should not have.' Having uttered these words several times, the learned one went to a village to beg for alms.

'"O bull among the Bharata lineage! He wandered around the pure households that were in the village. He finally entered a household that he had visited before. He asked,

‘Please give.’ And the lady replied, ‘Wait.’ O king! While the housewife was cleaning the vessel for giving alms, her husband suddenly returned home, extremely hungry. O supreme among the Bharata lineage! On seeing her husband, the devoted lady neglected the brahmana. She gave her husband water for washing the feet and the mouth and a seat. Then the dark-eyed one waited on her husband. She gave him tasty food to eat and spoke sweetly to him. O Yudhishthira! She always ate the food that had been left over by her husband. Always following her husband’s thoughts, she thought her husband to be a god. In deeds, thoughts or any other way, she did not act in contrary fashion. Her sentiments were always devoted towards serving her husband. She was faithful, pure and skilled. She strove for the welfare of the household. She always followed that which would ensure her husband’s welfare. She attended to gods, guests, servants, the father-in-law and the mother-in-law. She was always devoted to serving and was always in control of her senses. While the one with the beautiful eyes was thus tending to her husband, she noticed that the brahmana was standing there, wishing for alms. O supreme among the Bharata lineage! The faithful one was ashamed.

‘“The famous one emerged to give alms to the brahmana. The brahmana said, ‘O one with the beautiful limbs! What is the meaning of this? You asked me to wait. You requested me to wait and did not dispose of me first.’ O Indra among men! On seeing that the brahmana was burning in anger and flaming in his energy, the faithful one pacified him and spoke these words. ‘O brahmana! Please pardon me. My husband is my greatest god. He had returned hungry and exhausted and I had served him first.’ The brahmana said, ‘Brahmanas are not superior and you make your husband to be superior. Though following the dharma of householders, you are insulting a brahmana. Even Indra bows down to such a one, not to speak of men on earth. O impudent one! Do you not know and have you not heard from the elders? Like a fire, a brahmana can burn down the entire earth.’

‘“The lady replied, ‘I am not insulting brahmanas. They are powerful and are the equals of the gods. O brahmana! O unblemished one! Please pardon my transgression. I know the energy of immensely fortunate and wise brahmanas. Through their anger, they made the waters of the ocean salty and undrinkable.[147] I know of sages who are blazing ascetics and in control of their souls. The fire of their anger has still not been pacified in Dandaka.[148] Because he oppressed brahmanas, the evil-minded cruel and great asura Vatapi was digested by the rishi Agastya.[149] I have heard a lot about the influence of those who know the brahman. O brahmana! Their anger is extremely great. But so are the favours of those great-souled ones. O brahmana! O unblemished one! You should pardon this transgression of mine. O brahmana! The dharma that I must serve my husband is a pleasant one for me. Among all the gods, my husband is the supreme god. O supreme among brahmanas! I must particularly serve that dharma. O brahmana! Observe the fruits of my serving my husband. It is known to me that you burnt down a

crane through your anger. O supreme among brahmanas! But anger is the enemy that resides in the bodies of men. The gods know him to be a brahmana who has discarded the delusion of anger, and he who speaks the truth and satisfies his preceptor. The gods know him to be a brahmana, who does not harm even when he has been harmed. The gods know him to be a brahmana, who is in control of his senses, is devoted to dharma, is always engaged in studying, is pure and is in control of desire and anger. He who looks upon the world as his own self is intelligent and is learned in dharma. The gods know him to be a brahmana, who is devoted to all forms of dharma, who studies and teaches, who sacrifices and is a priest at the sacrifices of others. The gods know him to be a brahmana, who donates according to his capacity. The supreme among brahmanas who studies the Vedas is known as a brahmachari. He who studies without being distracted is known by the gods to be a brahmana. What ensures the welfare of brahmanas has been recounted—always speaking the truth and mentally not rejoicing in falsehood. O supreme among brahmanas! The eternal wealth of brahmanas is in studying, control of passions and restraint of the senses. Those who know dharma say that truth and uprightness are the supreme dharma. While eternal dharma is difficult to fathom, it is based on truth. The injunctions of the elders are that the proof of dharma is in the *shrutis*.[150] O supreme among brahmanas! It is evident that dharma can be seen in many ways and that it is subtle. You are learned in dharma. You are devoted to studying and are pure. O illustrious one! In my view you do not know the true meaning of dharma. There is a hunter who lives in Mithila. He serves his father and his mother, he is truthful and is in control of his senses. He will tell you about dharma. O fortunate one! O supreme among brahmanas! If you desire, go there. O unblemished one! Please pardon everything that I may have spoken in excess. All the ones who are learned in dharma say that women must not be injured.'

'"The brahmana replied, 'O fortunate one! O beautiful one! I am pleased with you and my anger has gone. The reprimands uttered by you have been extremely beneficial for me. O beautiful one! May you live in peace. I am leaving to improve myself.'"

'Markandeya said, "O supreme among men! Having obtained her permission, the brahmana Koushika censured himself and left for his own dwelling."'

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'Markandeya said, "The brahmana thought about the extraordinary matter the woman had specifically told him. He censured himself and his appearance became that of a guilty one. Then, thinking about the subtle course of dharma, he said, 'I must have devotion. I must go to Mithila. She said that a hunter who knew dharma, one who had perfected his soul, dwelt there. I should go there today, and ask the one who is rich in austerities about dharma.' Thus thinking in his mind, he showed faith in the lady's words, made certain by the pure one's words about dharma and her knowledge about

the death of the crane. Filled with curiosity, he left for Mithila. He passed through many forests, villages and cities and arrived in Mithila, protected well by Janaka.[151] It was a holy city, rich in sacrifices and festivals. It was full of religious institutions.[152] It was adorned with turrets, palaces, houses and walls. It also had many chariots. He entered the beautiful city. There were many large roads, laid out well, lined with many wares. It was crowded with great numbers of horses, chariots, elephants and carts. The masses of people were happy and well fed and it was always full of festivities. As he passed, the brahmana saw many other things there. He asked about the virtuous hunter and was told about him by brahmanas. He went there and saw the ascetic seated in the midst of a slaughterhouse. He was selling the meat of deer and buffaloes. It was crowded with a large number of buyers and the brahmana waited.

'"On getting to know that a brahmana had arrived, he[153] suddenly arose and went to where the brahmana was standing alone. The hunter said, 'O illustrious one! O supreme among brahmanas! I salute you. Welcome. O fortunate one! I am only a hunter. Tell me what I can do for you. I know everything about the devoted wife telling you to go to Mithila. I know why you have come here.' On hearing his words, the brahmana was extremely surprised. The brahmana thought that this was the second wonder. The hunter told the brahmana, 'O illustrious one! O unblemished one! This is not an appropriate place for you. If it pleases you, let us go home.' The brahmana was extremely happy at these words. Making the brahmana precede him, he went to his house. On entering the house, he gave him a beautiful seat. The supreme among brahmanas accepted the water offered for washing the feet and the mouth. Once he was comfortably seated, he spoke these words to the hunter. 'It seems to me that a task like this is not appropriate for you. O son![154] I am extremely sorry that you have to perform this terrible task.'

'"The hunter replied, 'This is the occupation of my family and it has come down to me from my father and my grandfather. O brahmana! Do not be angry that I am engaged in this dharma. The creator has earlier decided that this should be my task and I am performing it. O supreme among brahmanas! I take care of my superiors and I serve my elders. I speak the truth. I do not envy. I donate according to my capacity. I live on what is left after offering to the gods, the guests and the servants. I do not speak ill of anything. Nor am I contemptuous of someone more powerful. O supreme among brahmanas! The deeds performed earlier, always follow the actor. In this world, the means of livelihood are agriculture, animal husbandry and trade. Governance and the three forms of knowledge are also in this world.[155] It has been said that servitude is for shudras, agriculture for vaishyas and fighting for kshatriyas. Brahmanas must always be engaged in brahmacharya, austerities, incantations and truth. A king must govern, in accordance with dharma, subjects who are engaged in their own tasks. He must redeploy those who are engaged in the wrong tasks into their own tasks. The king is the

lord and he must always be feared by the subjects. Like deer restrained with arrows, he must kill those who are engaged in the wrong tasks. O brahmana rishi! O supreme among brahmanas! Under Janaka, there is no one who performs the wrong task. All the four varnas are engaged in their own tasks. King Janaka is such that even if his son were to be evil, he would chastise him with punishment. But he does not cause suffering to those who are righteous. Using spies well, the king sees that there is dharma everywhere. O supreme among brahmanas! Prosperity, the kingdom and punishment belong to the kshatriyas. Through observing their own dharma, kings can wish for great prosperity. O brahmana! I sell boars and buffaloes that have been killed by others. O brahmana rishi! I do not kill them myself, but sell them afterwards. I do not eat meat. I lie with my wife in her season. O brahmana! I fast during the day and eat at night. A person who is born with ill conduct may become one with good conduct. Even if he is born as a killer of animals, he may turn out to be a follower of dharma. The deviations of kings can cause great decay in dharma. Then adharma increases and subjects decay. Those who are stunted, dwarfs, hunchbacked ones, those with large heads, eunuchs, blind and deaf ones and those with elongated nipples are born then. Because of the adharma practised by kings, subjects always endure hardships. But King Janaka is one who looks at subjects with the eyes of dharma. He favours the subjects who are always devoted to their own dharma. As for me, whether men praise me or whether they censure me, I always satisfy them with tasks that are well performed. Kings who live their lives and find satisfaction in their own dharma and do not depend on others for a livelihood, are skilled and always ascend. Always donating food according to one's ability, forbearance, eternal devotion to dharma, reverence towards those who deserve it, constant compassion towards all beings and detachment are qualities that distinguish a man on earth. One should give up falsehood and perform good deeds, even if they are not solicited. One should not discard dharma out of desire, rashness or hatred. One should not rejoice excessively in good fortune, or be miserable in calamities. One should not be overpowered with difficulties and give up dharma. If one commits a reprehensible act, one should not commit it again. One should engage one's soul in what ensures welfare. Evil should not be countered with evil, one should always act out of virtue. The evil one who wishes to commit an evil act kills himself. Deceitful and wicked acts are not righteous. Those who think there is dharma in this, those who laugh at purity and those who are disrespectful towards dharma, there is no doubt that they will be destroyed. An evil one is swollen, like a bag full of air. But like the sun shows up forms, his soul shows him up. The fool may praise himself, but cannot flourish in this world. But even if he is not clean, a learned one's radiance shines. He does not speak ill of others. Nor does he praise himself. Those who have qualities don't obviously shine in this world. One who is tormented by his evil acts is freed from those sins. If he avers that he will not commit it again, he is freed from the second sin. O foremost among

supreme brahmanas! One can also be freed from the sin through deeds. O brahmana! This is what can be seen in the shrutis about dharma. One who has ignorantly committed a sin earlier, can later destroy it by devotion to dharma. O brahmana! Even if sins have been committed out of ignorance, dharma can absolve men. After committing a sin, one should think that one wasn't the man who committed it. He should be faithful and do what is proper. He should be devoted and without hatred. This is how righteous ones cover the holes in their garments. After committing a sin, a man can still achieve that which is good. He can be freed from all sins, like the moon from the clouds. Like the sun rises and dispels the earlier darkness, establishment in that which is good ensures freedom from all sin. O supreme among brahmanas! Know that avarice is the root of all sin. Men who are not too wise, are goaded by greed and resort to sin. Just as wells are covered by grass, evil ones cloak themselves under dharma. Those who have self-control, those whose speech is pure, those who resort to dharma and those who exhibit good conduct, it is known that all of these are difficult to find.'"

'Markandeya said, "Then the immensely wise brahmana asked the virtuous hunter, 'O best of men! How will I know righteous conduct? O immensely intelligent hunter! Tell me this exactly.'

'"The hunter replied, 'O best among brahmanas! Sacrifices, donations, austerities, study of the Vedas and truthfulness—these are the five sacred things that always characterize good conduct. Having controlled desire and anger, having discarded arrogance, greed and deceit, those who are satisfied with dharma are righteous and are praised by the righteous. Those who perform sacrifices and are engaged in studying will never lack a means of livelihood. They observe good conduct and this is the second characteristic of those who are righteous. O brahmana! Serving seniors, truthfulness, lack of anger and generosity—these four are always present in those who are righteous. One can always obtain success by fixing one's mind on good conduct. This can be obtained by practising these, and not through any other means. The Vedas are established in truth. Truth is established in self-control. Self-control is established in detachment. These always constitute righteous conduct. Men with deluded intelligence hate dharma. They follow a path that should not be traversed and descend into misery. Those who are good, well controlled, devoted to the shrutis and detachment, climb the path of dharma and are always devoted to truth and dharma. They control the supreme intelligence. These are people who follow virtuous conduct. They are obedient to their preceptors. They are knowledgeable and are established in the objective of dharma. Avoid atheists. They transgress limits. They are cruel and are established in evil intelligence. Seek knowledge and worship those who follow dharma. Using the boat of steadfastness, one can cross the river that has the five senses as its waters and is infested with the crocodiles of desire and avarice, and overcome birth. Dharma is gradually accumulated, through practising the great intelligence of yoga. It adorns righteous

conduct, like a good colour on a white garment. Non-violence and truthfulness in speech ensure the greatest welfare for all beings. Non-violence is supreme dharma and it is established in truth. Deeds flourish when inclinations are established in truth. Truth is supreme and is cherished by those who have righteous conduct. Dharma is the conduct of the righteous and the righteous are characterized by their conduct. Every being is bound by its own nature, whatever it might be. The evil-minded one has no control over himself and has the sins of anger, desire and so on. It has been said that dharma is that which has been begun with justice. The virtuous have instructed that evil conduct constitutes sin. Those who are not prone to anger, those who do not hate, those who are not vain, those who are not selfish and those who are simple and serene are characterized by good conduct. Those who have grown old with the three Vedas are pure and intelligent and have conduct. Those who serve their preceptors and have self-control possess good conduct. It is a difficult task to achieve the deeds of those great ones. Through their own good deeds, they destroy any evil that they may have done. That good conduct is extraordinary, ancient, eternal and fixed. This is dharma. Learned ones who see dharma in this way, go to heaven. They are theists. They are humble. They are people who honour brahmanas. They conduct themselves in accordance with the rituals of the shrutis and go to heaven. The dharma stated in the Vedas is supreme. The Dharmashastras are the second.[156] Virtuous conduct of righteous ones is another. These are the three notions of dharma. The characteristics of good conduct are accomplishing knowledge, bathing in tirthas, forbearance, truthfulness, simplicity and purity. Those who are compassionate towards all beings and always practise non-violence and never utter harsh words are loved by the brahmanas. Those who are familiar with the fruits of good and evil deeds are good and are honoured by those who are good. They are just, have all the qualities and desire the welfare of all the worlds. These virtuous ones attain sacred heaven. They are firmly established in the path of the righteous. Those who give, those who share and those who are compassionate towards the distressed are righteous and are honoured by the righteous. They are worshipped by everyone. They have the knowledge of the shrutis. They are ascetics. Those who show virtue in giving obtain happiness in this world and prosperity in the next. Even if their wives and servants suffer, righteous ones give in excess, when virtuous ones arrive. While their eyes are on their livelihood, they have dharma in their souls. Such virtuous ones prosper for an eternal period. Non-violence, truthfulness in speech, mildness, sincerity, the absence of enmity, humility, modesty, forbearance, self-control, serenity, wisdom, fortitude, compassion towards all beings and the absence of desire and hatred characterize the righteous, and they are honoured by the world. It is said that three things single out the supreme vows of the righteous—non-injury, generosity and truthfulness in every speech. The virtuous are those who are compassionate towards everything. They feel pity. They obtain the greatest satisfaction and traverse the supreme path of dharma. Those great-

souled ones have good conduct and have firmly established themselves in dharma. They have no envy. They pardon. They are serene. They are satisfied. They speak pleasantly. They have discarded desire and anger. They follow the conduct of the righteous. Their deeds are in accordance with the shrutis. They follow the supreme path of the virtuous. They follow good conduct and are always devoted to dharma, never wavering. They ascend to the palace of wisdom and see the great masses who are deluded. O supreme among brahmanas! They observe the world in all its different pursuits, the extremely good deeds, as well as the evil ones. O foremost among the best of brahmanas! This is the entire account, as I have learnt it and as I have heard it, about the foremost qualities and conduct of the righteous. O brahmana! O bull among brahmanas!'"

'Markandeya said, "O Yudhishthira! Thus did the hunter who knew about dharma speak to the brahmana.[157]

""'There is no doubt that the deeds that I perform are terrible. O brahmana! But destiny is powerful. And it is impossible to overcome deeds committed earlier. The sins committed earlier are the taints of karma.[158] O brahmana! I have endeavoured to kill this sin. When destiny has already killed something earlier, the killer is only the instrument. O supreme among brahmanas! We are only instruments of our karma. O brahmana! When they are killed and their meat sold, it is only their dharma that they should be used and eaten, so as to serve the gods, the guests, the servants and the ancestors. According to the shrutis, herbs, creepers, animals, deer and birds are the decreed food for all beings. O supreme among brahmanas! The compassionate King Shibi Ushinara obtained a heaven that is difficult to attain by offering his own flesh.[159] O brahmana! Earlier, in King Rantideva's great kitchen, two thousand animals were slaughtered every day.[160] Rantideva gave food with meat every day. O supreme among brahmanas! His fame is unmatched. He always killed animals at chaturmasya.[161] It has been said in the shrutis that the fire desires meat. O brahmana! A brahmana always kills animals at sacrifices. They are purified through mantras and we have heard that they go to heaven. O brahmana! O supreme among brahmanas! If the fire had not desired meat earlier, who would have eaten it now? Even now, sages have articulated rules on the eating of meat. "He who always eats after offering to the gods and the ancestors, in accordance with the rules and with faith, no sin attaches to him from the act of eating." It has been said in the shrutis that such a person is the equal of one who does not eat meat. A brahmana who has intercourse with his wife during her season is the equal of a brahmachari. The rules that differentiate truth from falsehood are recited even now. O brahmana! In earlier times, King Soudasa ate men.[162] He had been overtaken by a terrible curse. What do you think of that? O supreme among brahmanas! I cannot give up my own dharma. Knowing that this is due to my earlier deeds, I perform this task for my livelihood. O brahmana! It is considered to be adharma to give up one's own dharma. It is certainly dharma to adhere to one's own dharma. Deeds committed earlier never leave a being. The creator's ordinances foresaw the determination of these different forms of karma. It is seen that a being who is engaged in a cruel task has to think of performing good deeds so that he can be freed from its influence. There are different ways of freeing oneself from terrible karma—such as donations, truthfulness in speech, the service of superiors and the worship of brahmanas. I have always devoted myself to this dharma. O supreme among brahmanas! I should refrain from pride and from speaking too much. Agriculture is known to be a virtuous occupation. But it has been said that there is great violence in this. Ploughing kills many beings that lie inside

the ground and many other hundreds of beings. What is your view on this? O supreme among brahmanas! *Vrihi*[163] and other seeds of rice are all living organisms. What is your view on this? O brahmana! Man hunts, kills and eats animals. They also cut trees and herbs. O brahmana! There are many living beings in trees and fruit. There are many in water too. What is your view on this? O brahmana! Everything is full of life and living beings. Fish eat fish. What is your view on this? O supreme among brahmanas! Beings live on other beings. What is your view on this? O brahmana! Through the mere act of walking, men trample with their feet many beings that resort to the ground. What is your view on this? Even wise and learned ones kill many beings when they are seated or asleep. What is your view on this? The entire earth and the sky are full of living beings. One causes injury to them unknowingly. What is your view on this? Those men of earlier times wondered and spoke about non-violence. O supreme among brahmanas! But in this world, who does not injure living beings? After reflecting a lot on this, there is no one who does not cause violence. O supreme among brahmanas! Even ascetics who are devoted to non-violence cause violence, though their efforts make it less. It can be seen that there are men who have great qualities and who are born in noble lineages. They may perform extremely terrible deeds. But they are not ashamed. Well-wishers do not praise well-wishers. Evil-wishers do not praise evil-wishers. Men who are righteous do not praise other righteous ones. Relatives do not praise relatives, even if they are prosperous. Foolish ones, thinking themselves to be learned, criticize preceptors. O supreme among brahmanas! There are many things in this world that can be seen to be contrary. Is this dharma or is it adharma? What is your view on this? Many things can be said about the dharma or adharma of our deeds. But he who adheres to his own dharma attains great fame.'"'

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'Markandeya said, "O Yudhishthira! The skilled hunter, devoted to dharma, then again spoke to the brahmana rishi, supreme among those who uphold all forms of dharma.[164]

""'The course of dharma is subtle. It has many branches and is infinite. And the old ones have instructed that the proof is what is stated in the shrutis. When life is at risk or at the time of marriage, speaking a falsehood is permitted. Sometimes, falsehood becomes truth and truth becomes falsehood. Whatever ensures the welfare of beings is held to be the truth. Acting in a contrary way ensures adharma. Behold the subtlety of dharma. O excellent one! Whether a man performs good deeds or evil ones, there is no doubt that he certainly reaps the fruits. One who has no learning is ignorant of the sins of his acts. On confronting a calamity, he blames the gods gravely. O supreme among brahmanas! Foolish, deceitful and fickle ones do not possess the wisdom, the good conduct or the manliness to save themselves when their happiness or unhappiness happens to be reversed. One will obtain whatever one desires, as long as the fruits of

one's deeds are not dependent on anything else. Controlled, skilled and intelligent men can be seen to be obstructed and unsuccessful in all their efforts. But those who are always ready to injure other beings and are ready to deceive the world, always lead a life of happiness. There are those who attain prosperity without even trying. There are those who endeavour a lot and obtain nothing. Wretched ones worship the gods and perform austerities to obtain a son. They remain in the womb for ten months and are born, but turn out to be a stain on the lineage. Others enjoy the riches, grain and objects of pleasure accumulated in immense quantities by their fathers and obtained through auspicious means. There is no doubt that human disease is the result of earlier deeds, men are like small animals tied up by the hunter. O brahmana! Just as hunters hunt deer, competent physicians who have skilfully collected medicines can treat them. Those who can have good food are then afflicted by evils of indigestion. O supreme among those who uphold dharma! Behold, one is not able to eat. O supreme among brahmanas! There are many others with strong arms who suffer because they can find food with great difficulty. Thus the world is flooded with weeping, delusion and sorrow, helplessness, tossed and repeatedly washed away through powerful currents. If everything depended on a person, no one would live in misery and all objects of desire would be attained. No unpleasantness would be seen. Everyone wants to surpass others and endeavours as much as one can. But it doesn't happen that way. There are many who are seen to be born under the same stars and signs, but a great divergence is seen in the fruits of their deeds. O excellent one! O brahmana! No one can himself determine his fate. The deeds performed earlier are seen to lead to results here. O brahmana! It has been said in the shrutis that the soul is certainly eternal, but the bodies of all living beings perish in this world. Therefore, when the body dies, only the body is destroyed. Fettered by the bonds of deeds, the soul goes elsewhere.'

'"The brahmana asked, 'O supreme among those who uphold dharma! O supreme among those who are eloquent! In what way is the soul eternal? I wish to learn this in detail.'

'"The hunter said, 'The soul does not die when the body perishes. Only the foolish ones aver that it perishes. The soul moves on to another body. When the body dies, the form changes. No one except the actor obtains the fruits of deeds and shares in the happiness or unhappiness. Whatever deeds one may have done, those fruits remain and are not destroyed. Those who were unholy in conduct can become pure. The best of men can become sinners. A man is always pursued by his deeds. Determined by these, he is born again.'

'"The brahmana asked, 'O excellent one! How is he formed in the womb? How does he become good or evil? How are the good born good? How does that movement occur?'

'"The hunter replied, 'It is seen that the act of conception is linked to karma. O supreme among brahmanas! I will describe it to you swiftly and briefly. One is born

again with the past accumulation, the good in good wombs and the evil in evil wombs. Through good deeds one becomes a god. And through mixed ones, a human. Through evil deeds, one descends below.[165] It is because of the sins performed by him earlier that a man is cooked in this life and is always afflicted by birth, old age and death. Tied by the bonds of earlier karma, a being wanders through thousands of inferior births and even goes to hell. Through the karma of one's own deeds, a being dies and suffers. To counteract that earlier misery, it is born in an unholy womb. Then it again accumulates a large amount of new karma. It is cooked again, like a diseased person who has eaten unwholesome food. Although it suffers many difficulties, it considers that unhappiness to be tinged with happiness. Therefore, the bonds are not loosened and a new karma arises again. Encircled by many miseries, it circles around the world. By casting off those bonds of deeds and by performing pure deeds, one can obtain the worlds of righteous ones and go to where there is no sorrow. The sinful one who performs evil deeds never goes to where there is an end to sin. Therefore, one should perform good deeds and abhor those that are evil. A man who is grateful and does not suffer from malice and does that which ensures welfare, obtains happiness, dharma, artha and heaven. Those who are clean, self-controlled, restrained, collected and wise, enjoy an unmatched existence in this world and the next. One must always follow dharma. One must always act in accordance with what is good. O brahmana! One must adopt a conduct that does not cause difficulties to others. There are those who are learned in the sacred texts. They are virtuous and knowledgeable about the sacred texts. In this world, one must follow one's own dharma. Without getting mixed up, that is the task one should perform. One who is wise finds pleasure in dharma. He lives his life on the basis of dharma. O supreme among brahmanas! When he is rich in dharma, he appreciates its qualities and waters the roots. The one with dharma in his soul acts thus and his mind becomes serene. He is satisfied with his friends. He finds happiness here, and in the hereafter. O excellent one! He obtains sound, touch, form and fragrance, as he wishes. He attains lordship. These are known to be the fruits of dharma. O great brahmana! But having obtained the fruits of dharma, one may not be satisfied. One who is dissatisfied looks at this dissatisfaction with the insight of knowledge. With the insight of wisdom, a man does not see any sin in this. If he so desires, without discarding dharma, he frees himself. Observing that the world is naturally subject to decay, he renounces everything and strives for salvation, using the right means and not the wrong ones. He thus avoids all evil deeds and accepts the detachment. He is devoted to dharma and obtains supreme salvation. Austerities are the best course for beings and its root is tranquility and self-control. Through this, one can obtain everything that the mind desires. O supreme among brahmanas! Through restraining the senses, truthfulness and self-control, one obtains the supreme abode of the brahman.'

'"The brahmana asked, 'O one who is rigid in his vows! What are these faculties that

are called the senses? How can they be controlled and what are the fruits of this control? O foremost among those who uphold dharma! What are the fruits obtained from this? O best among those who follow dharma! I wish to know these details about dharma.'"'

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'Markandeya said, "O Yudhishthira! O lord of men! At these words of the brahmana, the hunter who knew about dharma replied to the brahmana. Listen."

'"The hunter said, 'O supreme among brahmanas! The mind first operates in men and leads to perception. Because of this, they serve desire and anger. For that purpose, they undertake great endeavours. They form the habit of serving the desires of beauty and smell. Then comes attachment and from this follows hatred. Avarice comes after that, followed by delusion. When they are overcome by avarice and battered by attachment and hatred, dharma is not generated in the intelligence. Instead, there is pretence about following dharma. Dharma is practised in deceit. One finds pleasure in acquiring artha through deceit. O supreme among brahmanas! One becomes successful in obtaining riches through deceit. The mind finds pleasure in this and evil becomes attractive. O supreme among brahmanas! Well-wishers and learned ones urge for restraint. But one is ready with replies from the shrutis and speaks of what is sanctioned by the shrutis. However, because of attachment, three sins of adharma are committed. There is sin in thought, speech and deed. Addicted to adharma, all the good qualities are destroyed. Only those who are similar in conduct remain friends with such an evil-acting one. As a consequence, unhappiness is reaped in this world and there is destruction in the next. All evil-souled ones are like this. Now hear about the gains from dharma. Through one's wisdom, one can foresee the sins. One is skilful in differentiating happiness from unhappiness and consorts with righteous ones. By practising virtuous deeds, one's intelligence turns to dharma.'

'"The brahmana said, 'You have truthfully described dharma. There is no one else who can speak about it in this way. It is my view that you are an extremely great rishi and your power is divine.'

'"The hunter replied, 'The immensely fortunate brahmanas are always rendered offerings first, together with the ancestors. In this world, with all one's soul, a learned one does that which is pleasing to them. O supreme among brahmanas! I will tell you what brings pleasure to them. After bowing in obeisance to brahmanas, I will tell you about the knowledge of brahmanas. Listen to me. O brahmana! This entire universe, everything in this universe and everything that cannot be vanquished and the great elements have the brahman in the soul. There is nothing beyond that. The great elements are the sky, the wind, the fire, the water and the earth. Sound, touch, shape, taste and smell are their properties. These properties have all the sub-properties, related

to one another. In due order, all the properties have a hierarchy consisting of the three qualities. It is said that the sixth property is consciousness, also called the mind. The seventh is intelligence and pride follows that. There are five senses. There is *sattva, rajas* and *tamas*.[166] These are the seventeen that constitute what is not manifest.[167] The manifest and the unmanifest are concealed well within the organs of sense. Including the manifest and the unmanifest, there are twenty-four traits.[168] I have told you everything. What else do you wish to hear?'""

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'Markandeya said, "O descendant of the Bharata lineage! This is what the hunter who knew about dharma said and after hearing this, the brahmana again asked about things that are pleasant to the mind. 'O supreme among those who uphold dharma! It is said that there are five great elements. Please tell me about the exact qualities of these five.'

""The hunter answered, 'The earth, the air, the fire, the water and the sky have separate qualities and I will tell you everything about their qualities. O brahmana! The earth has five qualities, the water has four qualities, the fire has three qualities and the air and the sky together have three qualities. Sound, touch, form, taste and smell—these are the five qualities of the earth, which has more qualities than the others. O supreme among brahmanas! O brahmana! O one who is rigid in his vows! Sound, touch, form and taste have been said to be the qualities of the water. Sound, touch and form are the three qualities of the fire. Sound and touch are the two properties of the air. The sky only has sound. O brahmana! Together, these fifteen qualities exist in the five elements and they are in all the beings on whom the worlds are established. O brahmana! They do not stand in opposition to one another, they exist as a combination. But when mobile and immobile objects become unbalanced, then, over a period of time, the soul moves from one body to another. In due order, they are destroyed. They are created again, in sequence. The five elements can be seen in everything, mobile and immobile, that this entire universe is encompassed by. Whatever is created by the senses is known as the manifest. Whatever cannot be grasped by the senses bears the mark of the unmanifest. Sound and the others grasp an embodied body and make him subjugate to the senses. But if he can transcend this, he can see the world extended in his soul and his soul extended in the world. He is then capable of seeing the higher and the lower, and though still attached, can see all beings. He always sees all the elements in all their states. He is united with the brahman and is never attached to that which is unholy. Delusion that is enveloped in difficulties is overcome and the root of this is knowledge of the soul. The world is illuminated with intelligence and the road of knowledge can be seen. The intelligent ones have said that the illustrious one is without a beginning and without an end. He creates himself and does not decay. He is without compare and without manifestation. O brahmana! Everything that you have asked me has its base in

austerities. Everything about heaven and hell is based on our senses. When restrained, they lead to heaven. When uncontrolled, they lead to hell. This subjugation of the senses is the key to yoga. This is the root of austerities. It is also the root of hell. By indulging in the senses, there is no doubt that one reaps sin. But by bringing them under control, one can attain salvation. If one can control these six[169] in one's soul, one never suffers a decline and one is not visited by sin or calamity. One has then conquered one's senses. It has been seen that a man's body is like a chariot. The senses are like horses and the soul controls them. When these good horses are skilfully controlled, one is self-controlled and happy, like a steady charioteer. When the six senses are always controlled in the soul, one is like a supreme and steady charioteer, wielding the reins in one's hand. When the senses are uncontrolled like horses on a road, the charioteer must steadily rein them in and it is certain that victory will be achieved. But if the mind is overpowered by these senses running wild, one loses one's intelligence, like a boat tossed on water by the wind. O brahmana! But one who perseveres steadily on these six and is not deluded about outcomes and fruit, concentrating on the insight of learning, reaps the fruits that are the outcome of his meditation.'"'

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'Markandeya said, "O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The hunter who knew about dharma explained these subtle matters. Extremely attentively, the brahmana again asked him about a subtle matter. The brahmana said, 'Now tell me exactly about the qualities of sattva, rajas and tamas. I am asking you, tell me exactly about their characteristics.'

'"The hunter replied, 'Yes, I will tell you what you have asked me. Because you have asked, I will tell you exactly about the characteristics of these qualities. Tamas is characterized by ignorance, while rajas motivates to action. It is said that sattva is the greatest because of its immense powers of illumination. One who is extremely ignorant, foolish, prone to dreaming, insensible, ugly, dark, prone to anger and lazy, is under the influence of tamas. O brahmana rishi! An excellent man who is ready in action and speech, affectionate, without enmity, industrious, steady and proud is under the influence of rajas. A man with illumination, persevering, without attachment and without enmity, without anger, wise and self-controlled, is under the influence of sattva. When one with the illumination of sattva suffers from the difficulties of the world, when one has learnt everything that has to be learnt, one hates the ways of the world. Then a form of detachment makes itself felt. Pride becomes milder and uprightness becomes stronger. Then all the conflicts[170] are pacified. Any restraint in anything then becomes unnecessary. O brahmana! One may be born as a shudra. But if he is established in his good qualities, he will become a vaishya, and even a kshatriya. Similarly, one who follows worthy conduct[171] can become a brahmana. Thus, I have told you everything

about the qualities. What else do you wish to hear?'

'"The brahmana asked, 'What happens to the fire in the body when it is combined with the elements of the earth? Depending on where it is, how does the wind motivate?'"

'Markandeya said, "O Yudhishthira! When the brahmana addressed this question to the hunter, the hunter replied to the great-souled brahmana.

'"The hunter answered, 'The fire resides in the head and protects the body. The fire is in the head and in *prana*[172] and motivates all action. Everything in the past, the present and the future is based on prana. It is the best that exists in beings and we worship this radiance of the brahman. It is the life force of all beings. It is the eternal being. It is the mind. It is intelligence. It is the ego. It is the seat of all beings. While residing in this way, everything is protected through prana. Later it goes in different directions, supported by *samana.* There is a fire in the bladder and the anus and this is known as *apana.* It bears the excrement and urine. Learned ones who know about the soul say that the three elements of endeavour, action and power are controlled by *udana.* It has been said that the breath that exists in every human joint is known as *vyana.* The fire that is there in the elements of the body is distributed by these winds. It triggers the juices, the elements and the humours and makes them circulate. Through the combination of the pranas, a fire is created. This is the digestive fire, which enables beings to digest food. Prana and vyana are placed between apana and udana and the fire resulting from this leads to the digestion. It extends itself up to the anus and bears the urine and the excrement. It has the three elements of endeavour, action and power and ones who are knowledgeable about the body know this by the name of udana. When the fire is present in all the joints of the human body, it is known by the name of vyana. The internal heat is distributed and supported by these different winds and they transform the juices, the constituents and the humours. Through the combination of prana and the other winds, a reaction is created. This gives rise to an internal heat in the body and facilitates digestion. Prana and vyana are established between apana and udana. The fire generated from this mingling facilitates digestion.[173] This extends up to the anus and is near the anus. The streams created from this are all the pranas in a body. Through the force of the fire, prana strikes at the root of the anus and recoiling, the fire ascends upwards again. The area above the navel is the region of undigested food. All the pranas are located at the centre of the navel in the body. Ten arteries radiate from the heart, upwards, downwards and sideways, and driven by the pranas, bear the essence of food. This is the path that practitioners of yoga traverse for the supreme objective. They are seated, having conquered difficulties. They are patient and their souls reside in their heads. In this way, prana and apana are established in all beings. The different components of a body go through eleven transformations.[174] Know that though a being is always embodied, it is subject to its earlier deeds. Know that the fire that is always

inside is like the fire purified in a pan and is the *atman*.[175] It is always subject to yoga. Know that the god is inside it, like a drop inside a lotus. Know that he is always the *kshetrajna* and can be known through yoga.[176] Know that sattva, rajas and tamas are the attributes of life. Know that these qualities are an attribute of life and that the atman is in the paramatman. It is said that consciousness is the quality of life. It is the actor, and action marks everything. Those who know about the kshetra say that the supreme one created the seven worlds.[177] In this way, the eternal being is not manifest in all beings. It can be seen by those who are learned and possess the subtle knowledge of insight. One can purify one's heart and destroy the fruits of good and evil deeds. Through establishing one's soul in serenity, one can attain infinite bliss. The signs of serenity are that one sleeps happily and contentedly, like the radiance of a lamp that has been trimmed by one who is skilled in handling lamps. One should control one's mind, late in the evening and at night. After eating lightly, with a purified soul, one sees the supreme soul in one's own self. This is like seeing the light of a lamp with the lamp of one's mind. One who sees the supreme soul, beyond the human soul, such a person is liberated. Avarice and anger must be controlled through all means. This is the purifying ritual for austerities and is the means of crossing over. One must always protect austerities from anger. One must protect one's riches from envy, one's learning from vanity and insults and one's soul from distraction. Mildness is the greatest dharma. Forgiveness is the greatest strength. Knowledge of the self is the supreme knowledge. Truthfulness is the supreme vow. True speech is superior. The knowledge of truth ensures welfare. But the welfare of all beings is known as the supreme truth. One whose acts are always performed without being tied down by self-interest, one who has sacrificed everything, is wise and is one who has renounced. This is yoga with the brahman, something that cannot be taught or disturbed by a preceptor. This renunciation is known as yoga. There must not be violence to any being. One must traverse the path of friendliness. In this present life, one must never practise enmity. Self-negation, extreme satisfaction, selflessness and steadfastness lead to the supreme knowledge. The knowledge of the self is the supreme learning. One should give up one's possessions. One should use one's intelligence to be steady in one's vows. One then attains a firm place that is without sorrow, in this world and the next. The self-controlled sage who has restrained his mind, and is always engaged in austerities, will be unvanquished if he gives up the desire to win and becomes detached from attachments. Those that are regarded as qualities are no longer qualities in him. He then continuously embarks on a single task. O brahmana! He is only engaged in the task of achieving supreme bliss. Such a man renounces both happiness and unhappiness. He transcends all attachment and achieves the brahman. O supreme among brahmanas! I have briefly told you everything that I have heard, exactly as I have heard it. What else do you desire to hear?'"'

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'Markandeya said, "O Yudhishthira! When all this about the dharma of salvation had been told to the brahmana, he was extremely pleased. He spoke to the hunter who knew about dharma. 'You have told me everything, with all the arguments. It seems that there is nothing about dharma that you do not know.'

""The hunter replied, 'O supreme among brahmanas! With your own eyes, behold my dharma. O bull among brahmanas! It is through this that I have achieved success. O illustrious one! Arise and swiftly enter my house. O one learned in dharma! You should see my mother and my father.'"

'Markandeya said, "At these words, he[178] entered and saw an extremely beautiful house. It was lovely and whitewashed and was divided into four parts. It was like a house of the gods and was worshipped by the gods. It had excellent seats and beds and was fragrant with perfumes. After having eaten, his adored parents were comfortably seated on excellent seats. They were dressed in white. On seeing them, the hunter who knew about dharma prostrated himself, with his head at their feet. The old ones said, 'O one who is learned about dharma! Arise. Arise. May dharma always protect you. We are extremely pleased with your purity. May you have a long life. O son! You have always been a good son. You have worshipped us for a long time. You have not acknowledged a god even among the gods themselves. Through self-control, you have attained the self-control of the brahmanas. O son! Your fathers, grandfathers and great grandfathers have always been satisfied with you, because of your self-control and your worshipping of us. In thought, deed and words, you have never deviated from servitude. It seems to us that you have no other thought in your mind. O son! Like Jamadagni's son Rama,[179] you have done everything to serve your aged parents. Indeed, you have done more.' Then the hunter who knew about dharma introduced the brahmana to them and they welcomed the brahmana with honours.

""The brahmana accepted the honours and asked them, 'Is everything well in your household, with your sons and your servants? Are you physically well, without any disease?' The old couple replied, 'O brahmana! Everything is well at home and the servants are fine too. O illustrious one! Did you confront any impediments in coming here?' The brahmana happily said that he hadn't faced any problems. The hunter who knew about dharma then spoke these words of great import to the brahmana. 'O illustrious one! These two, my father and my mother, are the supreme gods for me and I do for them what is undertaken for the gods. There are thirty-three gods, with Shakra at the forefront. Just as they are worshipped by all the worlds, so do I tend to my aged parents. Just as brahmanas collect offerings for the gods, so do I unceasingly act for these two. O brahmana! My father and my mother are my supreme gods. O brahmana! I continuously satisfy them with flowers, fruits and gems. They are like the fires the learned ones speak about. O brahmana! They are everything to me, like sacrifices and

the four Vedas. My life, my wife, my sons and my well-wishers are for them. With my sons and my wife, I always serve them. I bathe them myself and wash their feet. O supreme among brahmanas! I give them food myself. I only speak pleasant things to them, avoiding the unpleasant. So as to bring pleasure to them, I even do that which is adharma. O supreme among brahmanas! O brahmana! Knowing dharma to be my preceptor, I tirelessly serve them. O brahmana! It has been said that a man prospers through five gurus—the father, the mother, the fire, he himself and the preceptor. O supreme among brahmanas! If they are served properly, they always remain for him, like well-tended fires. That is the eternal dharma for those who are in the householder stage.'"'

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'Markandeya said, "Having introduced his parents to the brahmana as his greatest gurus, the hunter with dharma in his soul again spoke to the brahmana. 'Behold. I have obtained insight through the power of my austerities. It is for this reason that the devoted, self-controlled and truthful wife told you to go to Mithila, where a hunter who lives there would tell you about dharma.' The brahmana replied, 'O one who is learned about dharma! O one who is good in his vows! I remember the words of that devoted, truthful and virtuous wife. I know that you have good qualities.' The hunter said, 'O foremost among brahmanas! O illustrious one! There is no doubt that what you have said about me was completely foreseen by that faithful wife. O brahmana! It is to exhibit favours towards you that I showed you these things. O son![180] O brahmana! Now listen to the words that I am going to speak to you. O supreme among brahmanas! You have slighted your mother and father. O unblemished one! You left the house without their permission, for the sake of studying the meaning and the chanting of the Vedas. Your deeds caused great grief to your aged, ascetic and blind parents. Go and seek their favours, else great dharma will forsake you. You are an ascetic. You are great-souled. You are always devoted to dharma. But all of this has been futile. O brahmana! Therefore, listen to my words and do not act contrary to them. Return swiftly and show them your devotion. O brahmana rishi! I am telling you this for your own welfare.'

'"The brahmana answered, 'O fortunate one! O one who has the qualities and conduct of dharma. There is no doubt that everything that you have said is true. I am pleased with you.' The hunter said, 'You are the equal of the gods and you are always devoted to dharma that is ancient, eternal and divine, difficult of access to those who have not perfected their souls. Go swiftly to your mother and your father and worship them unceasingly. Beyond that, there is no other supreme dharma that I can see for you.' The brahmana replied, 'It is through good fortune that I came here. It is through good fortune that I met you. Men like you, exponents of dharma, are difficult to find in this world. Among one thousand men, one may find someone who is learned in dharma, or

one may not. O fortunate one! O supreme among men! I am pleased with your truthfulness. I was descending into hell and you have saved me. O unblemished one! It had been destined and that is the reason I met you. O tiger among men! King Yayati fell and was rescued by his daughter's virtuous sons.[181] Like that, I have now been saved by you. As you have said, I will serve my mother and my father. One who has not perfected his soul does not know how to differentiate between dharma and adharma. The eternal dharma is incomprehensible to one who has been born in the womb of a shudra. I do not regard you as a shudra. There must be some reason. Perhaps you obtained the status of a shudra because of your specific deeds. O immensely intelligent one! I wish to know the details about this. O one who has controlled his soul! If you so desire, please tell me everything accurately.'

"The hunter replied, 'O supreme among brahmanas! No brahmana should be crossed. O unblemished one! Therefore, hear everything that had happened to me in an earlier body. O son of foremost among brahmanas! I was a brahmana earlier. I studied the Vedas well and was skilled in the Vedangas. But it is because of my own sins that I have been reduced to my present state. There was a king who was my friend and he was skilled in the use of arms. O brahmana! Because of my association with him, I also became supreme in wielding the bow. Once upon a time, the king went out hunting. He was surrounded by his advisers and was with his foremost warriors. Near a hermitage, he killed many deer. O supreme among brahmanas! I also shot a swift and terrible arrow, with a plume that was bent downwards. It hurt a rishi. The brahmana fell down on the ground and shouted, "I am innocent. Who has performed this evil deed?" Still thinking him to be a deer, I rushed towards him and suddenly saw the sage. I saw that the rishi had been pierced by my arrow, with a plume that was bent downwards. My mind was troubled to see that I had performed an act that should not be performed. I then told the extremely ascetic brahmana, who was dying on the ground. "I performed this act out of ignorance. Please pardon me. O brahmana! I should be forgiven." Thus did I speak to the sage. But the rishi was overcome with anger and replied in these words. "O cruel one! O brahmana! You will be born as a hunter and will be born from a shudra womb."'"'

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"'The hunter said, 'O supreme among foremost of brahmanas! When I had thus been cursed by the rishi, I spoke to the one who was eloquent with words. "O rishi! Please show me your favours. O sage! I performed this act out of ignorance today. O illustrious one! Please pardon me. Please show me your favours." The rishi replied, "There is no doubt that the curse that I have pronounced cannot be negated. But because of my mildness, I will now show you a favour. Even when you are born in the womb of a shudra, you will be learned about dharma. There is no doubt that you will serve your

mother and your father. Through serving them, you will achieve great success. You will remember your earlier birth and you will go to heaven. When the curse has run its course, you will again become a brahmana." In this way, I was cursed by that terribly ascetic rishi in earlier times. O supreme among men! But he showed me his favours too. O supreme among brahmanas! I took the arrow out of his body. I carried him to the hermitage and he did not lose his life. These are the details of everything that befell me earlier. O supreme among brahmanas! I will go to heaven in the hereafter.'

'"The brahmana replied, 'O greatly intelligent one! All men are subject to unhappiness and happiness in this way. You should therefore not grieve over this. O son![182] You have performed a difficult task, you have learnt about your earlier life. O learned one! The taint of your evil deeds is because of the lineage you have been born into. After some time has passed, you will become a brahmana again. There is no doubt that I think you to be a brahmana even now. A brahmana who performs evil deeds is certain to meet with downfall. One who is vain and the performer of evil deeds is almost equal to a shudra. A shudra who is controlled, truthful and devoted to dharma, always rises. I think him to be a brahmana who becomes a brahmana because of his conduct. Through the taints of evil karma, one attains a terrible end. O supreme among men! I think that all of your sins have been destroyed. You should not be anxious on this account. You should not sorrow and you should not hesitate. You know about the ways of conduct in the world. You are always devoted to dharma.'

'"The hunter said, 'Like physical pain is destroyed with medicines, mental pain is destroyed with wisdom. This capacity for knowledge does not come equally to those who are fools. Men of limited intelligence are overcome by mental distress when they are confronted with calamities and are separated from that which is pleasant. All beings have some good qualities and some bad ones. Everyone is subject to this and there is no reason for grief. When one sees something unpleasant, one should swiftly withdraw. One should take countermeasures if one sees it coming. Nothing happens to the one who sorrows. He can only lament. Men who give up both happiness and unhappiness are learned ones who are satisfied with knowledge. They are really happy. The ignorant are always dissatisfied. The learned are always satisfied. There is no end to dissatisfaction. Satisfaction is supreme happiness. Those who do not sorrow have gone along that path. They can see the supreme objective. One should not immerse one's mind in grief. Grief is a terrible poison. Like an angry serpent, it kills those who are foolish and have not attained wisdom. One who is overcome by sorrow when difficulties surface, his energy is destroyed and he has no manliness. There is no doubt that the fruits of our deeds can be seen. One who falls prey to despair does not obtain that which is good. Instead, one should look for means to free oneself from misery. One should not sorrow, but be united with the good. If one thinks about the nature of all beings, one obtains supreme intelligence. One should not sorrow. One should obtain wisdom. One should look

towards the supreme objective. O learned one! I do not sorrow. I am waiting for the time to pass. O brahmana! O excellent one! It is for this reason that I am not constrained.'

'"The brahmana replied, 'You have attained wisdom. You are learned. You have great intelligence. You are content in knowledge. You are devoted to dharma. You have nothing that I can sorrow about. I wish to take my leave. May you be in peace. May dharma protect you. O supreme among those who uphold dharma! May you not deviate in your duty towards dharma.'"

'Markandeya said, "Joining his hands in salutation, the hunter granted leave. The supreme among brahmanas circumambulated him and departed. When he returned, the brahmana began to always assiduously serve his mother, his father and the elders, in accordance with the prescribed rules. O Yudhishthira! O son![183] O foremost among those who uphold dharma! I have thus told you everything that you asked me about—the greatness of a faithful wife, the excellence of brahmanas and servitude towards the mother and the father by the hunter, recounted as dharma."

'Yudhishthira replied, "O brahmana! This supreme account of dharma is extraordinary. O supreme among those who know all forms of dharma! O supreme sage! Your account is the best. O learned one! Listening to you, to these pleasant accounts, it seemed to be but an instant. O illustrious one! But I am still not satisfied about listening to supreme dharma."'

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Vaishampayana said, 'When Dharmaraja had heard these holy accounts, full of dharma, he again asked rishi Markandeya. "In ancient times, why did Agni leave for the forest? In Agni's absence, how did the great rishi Angiras become fire and carry the oblations? Agni is one. But his acts are seen to be many. O illustrious one! I wish to know everything about this. How was Kumara[184] born? How did he come to be known as Agni's son? How did Rudra beget him on Ganga and the Krittikas?[185] O descendant of the Bhargava lineage! I wish to hear about all this exactly. O great sage! I am full of curiosity."

'Markandeya said, "Ancient history is recounted about this. The bearer of oblations[186] was angered and went to the forest to perform austerities. The illustrious Angiras then transformed himself into Agni. Through his powers, he destroyed distress and darkness. In his hermitage, the immensely fortunate one surpassed Agni. Having become that, he then illuminated the world. Agni was then performing austerities and was tormented by this energy. The energetic one was extremely distressed, but did not know what to do. The illustrious Agni then thought, 'This other Agni has been unleashed in the world by Brahma. While I was engaged in austerities, my services as Agni have

been dispensed with. How can I become Agni again?’ While he was thus reflecting, Agni saw the great sage, providing heat to the world. He approached slowly and fearfully and Angiras told him, ‘Swiftly become Agni and bring prosperity to the worlds again. You are known to the three worlds and all objects, mobile and immobile. O Agni! You were the first to be created by Brahma, so that darkness could be dispelled. O destroyer of darkness! Swiftly regain your own position.’ Agni replied, ‘My deeds have been destroyed in this world and you have become Agni. You have become Agni. You are known as Agni and people do not know me. I have thrown away my role as Agni. You remain as the primary Agni. I will be the second, known as Prajapatyaka.’[187] Angiras said, ‘Perform the auspicious deeds that take beings to heaven. Be Agni, the dispeller of darkness. O god! O Agni! Perform the act of obtaining your first son through me.’ O king! On hearing these words of Angiras, Jataveda[188] did as he had been asked to. Angiras had a son by the name of Brihaspati. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! On knowing that Angiras’s son was Agni’s first son, the gods arrived and asked about the reason for this. Having been thus asked by the gods, Angiras told them the reason for this and the gods accepted the explanation. I will now tell you about the different immensely radiant fires used for rites. They are known to the brahmanas by their many tasks and names.”’

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‘Markandeya said, “O extender of the Kuru lineage! Brahma’s third son had Apava’s daughter as a wife.[189] O king! Listen to the account of his offspring—Brihajjyoti, Brihatkirti, Brihadbrahma, Brihanmana, Brihanmantra, Brihadbhasa and Brihaspati. The first daughter of Angiras was the goddess Bhanumati. Among all his offspring, she was unmatched in beauty. Angiras’s second daughter was named Raga. She was loved by all beings and that was the reason she was known as Raga.[190] Angiras’s third daughter was Sinivali. Her form was thin and her body was sometimes seen and sometimes not seen. So it was said that she was like Kapardin’s daughter.[191] Then Archismati was seen with her radiance and Havismati with her oblations. Angiras’s sixth sacred daughter was named Mahishmati. The seventh of Angiras’s daughters was Mahamati. She was radiant and was honoured at great sacrifices. This seventh daughter, Mahamati, was renowned. On seeing another immensely fortunate daughter, people wonderingly exclaimed that she was one and could not be divided. She was given the name of Kuhu.”’[192]

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‘Markandeya said, “Brihaspati’s wife was the famous Chandramasi. She gave birth to six sacred fires and a daughter. The fire at which oblations of clarified butter are offered is named Shamyu, Brihaspati’s immensely radiant son. Oblations are first offered to him at

chaturmasya and the foremost animal at horse sacrifices. This energetic fire is one that is characterized by many-hued flames. Shamyu's unmatched wife was Satya. Satya was born from Dharma. He[193] had the blazing Agni as his son, and three daughters who were good in their vows. The fire that is worshipped with the first share of offerings is Bharadvaja, said to be Agni's first son. The fire that is Shamyu's second son is known by the name of Bharata. At the time of full moon sacrifices, all the oblations are offered to it with ladles. There were three daughters who had Bharata as a husband. He had a son named Bharata and a daughter named Bhavati.[194] The fire named Bharata was the son of the fire named Prajapati Bharata. O foremost among the Bharata lineage! He was greatly honoured and his appellation was 'Great'. Bharadvaja's wife was Vira and she gave birth to Vira.[195] It is said by the brahmanas that he is slowly offered the same oblations as Soma. There is a fire that is offered the second round of oblations with Soma and this is known as Rathaprabhu, Rathadhvana and Kumbhareta. On his wife Sarayu, he begot Siddhi and surpassed the sun in his splendour. He is the one who brought *agneya*[196] and he is always mentioned in invocations. The fire Nishchyavana always praises the earth. It never declines[197] in fame, energy or prosperity. The fire Vipapa is his son. He is without sin[198] and without taint and has pure and blazing flames. He is truthful and is the one who ensures deeds on time. The fire named Nishkriti[199] frees beings from lamentations. When worshipped well, he brings good fortune. His son is the fire named Svana, the creator of suffering. He inflicts severe suffering on people and makes them lament. Those who know about the soul, address a fire by the name of Vishvajit. He strides through the intelligence of all beings in the universe. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! There is a fire that is known as the internal fire. It digests food inside the bodies of all beings and is known by the name of Vishvabhuj. He is a brahmachari and self-controlled. He is always extensive in his vows. The brahmanas worship this fire with oblations of cooked food. He is famous as Gopati and a river was his beloved. Those who observe rites use this fire in all their rites. There is an extremely terrible fire by the name of Vadava. He drinks up water and has a tendency to rise. He has the name of Urdhvabhaj[200] and the wise know that he is established in prana. There is a fire to whom oblations are always offered in a household in a northward direction. This supreme one is known by the name of Svishtakrit. His daughter is named Manyati and she is the fire of anger that is incited in calm beings. She is the essence of anger and is thus named.[201] This terrible and cruel one is established in all beings by the name of Svaha. There is a fire that has been named Kama by the gods. There is no one among the thirty gods with his beauty and because his form is unequalled, he is so named.[202] The fire named Amogha destroys enemies in battle.[203] He wields a bow and is seated erect on a chariot, adorned with

garlands. He restrains his anger. O immensely fortunate one! There is another known as Uktha, praised by the three *ukthas*. He is the creator of great speech and is therefore known as Sakamashva.'"[204]

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'Markandeya said, "Kashyapa, Vasishtha, Prana's son Prana, Agni Angiras and Chyavana Trishuvarchaka performed terrible austerities for many years, so as to obtain a son. 'May we obtain a famous son who follows dharma. May he be Brahma's equal.' They uttered the five great *vyahritis*.[205] Then an immensely energetic and powerful fire with five colours was created. His head consisted of the fire made out of kindling. His arms were like the sun. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! His complexion was golden and his feet were black. Through their great austerities, these five gave him those five colours. The Vedas therefore know him as Panchajanya and he became the origin of the five lineages.[206] He performed great austerities for ten thousand years. He created beings and he created the terrible fire of the ancestors. He created *brihat* and *rathantara*, those stealers of vigour, from his head and his mouth.[207] He created Shiva from his navel, Indra from his strength, Vayu and Agni from his breath of life, the two accents[208] from his two arms, the universe and all the beings. Having created these, he created the five sons of the ancestors—Pranidhi, the son of Brihadurjas; Brihattara, the son of Kashyapa; Bhanu, the brave son of Angiras; Soubhara, the son of Varcha; and Anudatta, the son of Prana. These are known as those who created five lineages. Austerities created the fifteen gods who are the obstructers of sacrifices—the sacrifice, the dawn, Abhima, Atibhima and Bhimabalabala. Austerities created the five gods for sacrifices—Sumitra, Mitravat, Mitrajna, Mitravardhana and Mitradharma. Austerities also produced these five gods—Surapravira, Vira, Sukesha, Suvarcha and Surahanta. These three classes of five each are separately established. Placed here on earth, they obstruct those who wish to perform sacrifices in heaven. They cause obstructions and steal large quantities of oblations. They insolently create obstructions and steal, though oblations are carried by the fire. But if the fire has been skilfully placed, they cannot approach the oblations on the sacrificial altar. They cannot go near the fire. On both sides, the fire then carries the sacrificial offerings. If pacified through mantras, they do not steal the sacrificial offerings. Brihaduktha, another son of austerities, lives on earth. He is worshipped on earth by those who observe agnihotra properly. Rathantara is another fire that is the son of austerities. Learned adhvaryus know that his offerings are meant for Mitravinda.[209] He[210] was thus extremely satisfied with his immensely famous sons."'

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‘Markandeya said, “The fire named Bharata is subject to severe restrictions. The fire named Pushtimati provides prosperity when it is satisfied. It is because it sustains all beings that it is known as Bharata.[211] The fire named Shiva is always engaged in the worship of Shakti. Since he alleviates the sufferings of everyone and brings purification, he is known as Shiva.[212] When Tapas[213] witnessed the great fruits from austerities, an extremely wise son named Purandara was born to him, with a desire to pass on these fruits. Another son named Ushma was born and this fire can be seen in all beings. A fire named Manu was also born and he officiates as Prajapati. The brahmanas who are learned in the Vedas speak of a fire named Shambhu. The brahmanas also speak of an extremely radiant fire named Avasathya. Thus Tapas created five sons from his sacrifice—Urjaskara and Havyavahana, they were like gold in their radiance.[214] O immensely fortunate one! When exhausted and pacified, the lord of the cows gave birth to terrible asuras and various other beings on earth.[215] Angiras created Tapas’s son Manu, and Bhanu too. However, brahmanas who know the Vedas refer to him as Brihadbhanu. Bhanu’s wife was Supraja, and so were Brihadbhasa and Somaja. They gave birth to six sons. Listen to the offspring. The fire that provides strength to all beings is Bhanu’s first son and is known as Balada. The fire that is seen as terrible wrath in calm beings is Bhanu’s second son and is known as Manyumat. The fire in whose honour oblations are offered at the time of the new moon or the full moon is known by the name of Vishnu, also named Dhritiman Angiras. There is a fire to whom the first offerings of oblations are made, together with Indra. He is Bhanu’s son and is named Agrayana. In addition to these four,[216] there is a son named Niragraha who always takes oblations at chaturmasya sacrifices. He is Bhanu’s son. Nisha was Manu’s wife. She gave birth to a daughter, the two Agnishomas and five other fires. The radiant fire, who receives the first offerings at chaturmasya sacrifices, together with Parjanya,[217] is known as Vaishvanara. The fire that is said to be the lord of all beings is Manu’s second son and has the name of Vishvapati. Svishtakrit[218] is regarded as the supreme, because there is great merit in offering oblations to him. The maiden named Rohini was Hiranyakashipu’s daughter. Because of her deeds, she became the wife of a fire who was a Prajapati. There is another fire that resides in the bodies of all living beings in their breath of life. This is named Samnihita and leads to sound and form. There is a god whose path is marked in black and white.[219] He is the fire who bears oblations. He is the lord of all that leads to taints in untainted ones and is based in anger. The fire named Kapila is the expounder of sankhya yoga. Ascetics refer to him as the supreme rishi Kapila.[220] In various rites, there is a fire through which the first share of oblations is rendered to those who are deceased. This is known as Agrani. Thus, he[221] created different famous fires on earth. When there are seen to be defects in agnihotra

sacrifices, they correct these. If the action of the wind makes the fires interact with each other, eight different rites must be performed to the fire Shuchi. If the fire to the south is mixed with the other two fires, eight different rites must be performed to the fire named Viti. If the sacrificial fire is mixed with the fire of a conflagration, eight different rites must be performed to the fire Shuchi. If the fire of agnihotra is touched by a woman who is in her season, eight different rites must be performed to the fire Dasyumat. If one hears that a living being has died, or if an animal dies, eight different rites must be performed to the fire Abhimat. A brahmana who has not rendered offerings into the fire for three nights, must perform eight different rites to the northern fire. He who still awaits the observance of new moon and full moon rituals, must perform eight different rites to the fire Pathikrit. If the fire of one who is expecting touches the agnihotra fire, eight different rites must be performed to the Agnimat fire."'

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'Markandeya said, "Mudita was the beloved wife of Saha Apa. The lord of bhuh and bhuvah begot an excellent fire. This is known as the fire that is the lord of all beings. The brahmanas say that this fire is the lord of the earth and is in the souls of all beings. This great fire is the lord of all beings. This immensely energetic and illustrious fire always circulates. This fire is always worshipped at sacrifices by the name of *garhapatya.*[222] This fire bears the oblations that are made in this world. Saha's extremely extraordinary and immensely fortunate son is known as Apamgarbha. He is known as the lord of bhuh, bhuvah and mahah. His son, Bharata, consumes the dead bodies of all beings. At agnishtoma sacrifices, the Niyata is the best rite for sustenance.[223]

'"On seeing Niyata arrive, he[224] was frightened and hid in the ocean. The gods sought him along every road and every direction, but could not find him. On seeing Atharva,[225] Agni said, 'O brave one! I am extremely weak. Please carry the oblations to the gods. O Atharva! Become one with sweetness in your eyes and perform this task for my pleasure.' Having thus spoken to Atharva, he went somewhere else. But the fish revealed where he was concealed, and angered, Agni told them, 'In your different forms, you will be the food of beings.'[226] Then the bearer of oblations spoke to Atharva again. Though the gods beseeched them, he paid no heed to their words and refused to bear the oblations. He gave up his entire body. Having discarded his body, he entered the earth. Having touched the earth, he created different types of minerals separately. From his mouth, he created fragrances and energy; from his bones, devadarus; from his phlegm, crystal; from his bile, emeralds; and from his liver, black iron. All beings blaze with these three substances.[227] His nails became mica and his arteries became coral. O king! Various other minerals were produced from his body. Having discarded his body, he remained established in supreme austerities. He was roused through the austerities of

Bhrigu, Angiras and the others. Gratified through the power of austerities, the crested fire blazed forth in great resplendence. But on seeing the rishis, he was frightened and hid in the great ocean. The universe was scared and sought refuge with Atharva. The asuras, gods and rishis worshipped Atharva. On seeing Agni, Atharva himself created the worlds. While all the beings looked on, he churned the great ocean and the illustrious Atharva restored Agni to the earlier position that he had lost. Since then, he has always borne the oblations of all beings. While he roamed and travelled in many different countries, he[228] created the many different sacrificial hearths that are mentioned in the Vedas. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The five rivers other than the Sindhu,[229] Devika, Sarasvati, Ganga, Shatakumba, Sarayu, Gandaki, Charmanvati, Mahi, Medhya, Medhatithi, the three rivers Tamravati, Vetravati and Koushiki, Tamasa, Narmada, Godavari, Venna, Praveni, Bhima, Medratha, Bharati, Suprayoga, Kaveri, Murmura, Krishna, Krishnavenna, Kapila and Shona—these rivers are famous as the mothers of the sacrificial hearths.

'"Adbhuta had a wife named Priya and her son was Viduratha. There are as many soma rites as the number of fires that have been mentioned. All these were born in Atri's lineage, but were Brahma's offspring through his mental powers. Desiring offspring, Atri created them in his own body. However, all these fires originated from Brahma's body. The account of the great-souled fires, and their origin, has thus been told by me. They are immeasurable and beautiful and are the dispellers of darkness. Know that they have the greatness of the fire Adbhuta[230] recounted in the Vedas. All these fires are really the same. There is only one illustrious fire that is to be known. It issued first from Angiras's body, in many different forms, like the jyotishtoma sacrifice.[231] Thus, the extremely great lineage of Agni has been recounted by me. When purified with different mantras, it bears the oblations of embodied beings."'

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'Markandeya said, "O unblemished one! Thus, the genealogy of the different fires has been recounted by me. O Kouravya! Now hear about the birth of the intelligent Kartikeya. I will tell you about Adbhuta's extraordinary and infinitely energetic son, whose deeds were extensive. He was born from the wives of the seven brahmana rishis. In ancient times, the gods and the asuras were always engaged in destroying each other. The danavas, terrible in form, were always able to vanquish the gods. On witnessing that his armies had been destroyed by them several times, Purandara[232] was greatly anxious about finding a general for his army. He thought, 'I must find an extremely powerful person who, on seeing the army of the gods destroyed, will have the valour to protect it.' On reflecting about this, he went to Mount Manasa and heard terrible lamentations that were voiced by a woman. 'Let someone come to me. Let a man come

and protect me. Let him show me a husband. Or let him become my husband himself.' Purandara told her, 'Do not be afraid. You have no reason to be scared.' When he said this, he saw Keshi[233] standing before him. He wore a crown on his head and held a club in his hand. He looked like a mountain, rich in minerals.

'"Grasping the maiden by the hand, Vasava[234] told him, 'Why are you acting towards this maiden like someone who is not an arya? Know me to be the wielder of the vajra and refrain from causing her any violence.' Keshi replied, 'O Shakra! Let her be. I desire her. O chastiser of Paka![235] Return to your city with your life.' Having said this, Keshi flung his club at Indra, so as to kill him. But as it descended, Vasava sliced it into two with his vajra. Enraged, Keshi then flung the peak of a mountain. O king! On seeing that mountain peak descend, Shatakratu[236] splintered it with his vajra and it fell down on the ground. As it fell, the peak hurt Keshi. Having been thus hurt, he let go of the immensely fortunate maiden and fled. When the asura had left, Vasava spoke to the maiden. 'O one with the beautiful face! Who are you? Whose are you? What are you doing here?' The maiden answered, 'I am Prajapati's daughter, famous by the name of Devasena. My sister Daityasena has already been abducted by Keshi.[237] When Prajapati gave us permission, we sisters always used to come to Manasa to sport, together with our friends. The great asura Keshi always craved for our favours. O chastiser of Paka! Daityasena desired him, but I did not. O illustrious one! She was then abducted, but I have been freed through your strength. O lord of the gods! I desire that an invincible one like you should be my husband.' Indra replied, 'My mother is Dakshayani.[238] You are the daughter of my mother's sister. I desire that you should tell me about your own strength.' The maiden said, 'O mighty-armed one! I am weak, but my husband will be strong. Through my father's boon, he will be worshipped by the gods and the asuras.' Indra replied, 'O goddess! O unblemished one! What kind of strength will your husband possess? I wish to hear this from you.' The maiden said, 'He will be immensely valorous and immensely strong. He will vanquish the gods, the danavas, the yakshas, the kinnaras, the serpents and the rakshasas. He will be seen to vanquish all the evil ones. Together with you, he will vanquish all the beings. Such will my husband be. He will have the traits of a brahmana. He will be extensive in his deeds.' On hearing her words, Indra was unhappy and began to think, because there was no one who could be the husband the goddess had spoken of.

'"Then the one, whose radiance was like the sun,[239] saw the sun rise on Udaya.[240] He also saw the immensely fortunate moon enter the sun. The new moon had set in and it was a terrible instant. He saw the gods and the asuras fighting on Mount Udaya. Shatakratu saw that the dawn was tinged with red clouds. The illustrious one also saw that Varuna's abode[241] was red. He saw Agni enter the sun, bearing oblations offered with mantras by Bhrigu, Angiras and the others. He also saw the twenty-four parvas

surrounding the sun.[242] It was a terrible instant. The moon, traversing the path of dharma, was united with the sun. On seeing the union of the sun and the moon, and on witnessing that terrible instant, Shakra began to think. 'This great conjunction is terrible and is united with energy. This conjunction of Agni, the sun and the moon is extraordinary. If the moon begets a son now, he may be the husband of the goddess. Agni has all the qualities too and Agni is also a god. If he begets a son, he may be the husband of the goddess too.' Having thought in this way, the illustrious one went to Brahma's world, taking Devasena with him. Worshipping the grandfather, he said, 'Please grant a brave husband for this goddess.' Brahma replied, 'O destroyer of danavas! It will be done as you have thought. There will be an embryo with great strength and valour. O Shatakratu! Together with you, he will be your army's general. That valorous one will be the husband of this goddess.' Hearing these words, the lord of the gods bowed in obeisance. Together with the maiden, he went to the abode of the devarshis. With Vasishtha at the forefront, those chief among the foremost of the brahmanas were extremely great in their vows. With Shatakratu leading them, the gods went to the sacrifice, thirsting for a share of the soma that had been obtained through austerities. Having performed the sacrifice in accordance with the prescribed rites, the great-souled ones[243] offered oblations to all the gods into the well-kindled fire. The Adbhuta fire, the bearer of oblations, was summoned from the sun's circle. According to the prescribed rules, the lord Agni emerged. He restrained his speech, and entered the sacrificial fire, into which, oblations had been offered with mantras. Various oblations had been rendered by the rishis and Agni accepted these. O best of the Bharata lineage! Having accepted them, he carried them to the residents of heaven.

'"When he emerged, he saw the wives of those great-souled ones.[244] They were seated in their hermitages and were happily bathing. Their complexions were as golden as sacrificial altars. They were as unblemished as a digit of the moon.[245] Their limbs glowed with the radiance of the fire. They were as extraordinary as the stars. On seeing the wives of those foremost among brahmanas, Agni became overcome with desire and his mind and his senses were stirred. But he thought, 'It is not proper for me to be excited. These are the wives of the foremost among brahmanas. They are beyond the reach of desire and I am desiring them. I cannot look at them, or touch them, without justified reason. I will therefore enter the household fire, and thereby, satisfy myself by always looking at them.' He entered the household fire and happily looked at them. He touched all of them with his flames, golden in complexion. Overcome by those beautiful ones, Agni lived there, his heart attracted by love for them. However, he was not able to obtain the wives of the brahmanas. And since his heart was tormented by desire, Agni decided that he would give up his body. He went to the forest. But Daksha's daughter, Svaha, had desired Agni earlier. For a long time, the beautiful one had been watching

out for a weakness. However, the unblemished one did not find one in the god who was never distracted. But on learning that Agni had left for the forest, the beautiful one, who was tormented by desire, began to think. 'I will assume the forms of the wives of the saptarshis and seek out Agni. He is overcome with desire. I will seduce and desire him in those forms. On doing this, he will be delighted and my desire will be satisfied.'"'

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'Markandeya said, "Shiva[246] was the wife of Angiras. She was endowed with conduct, beauty and qualities. O lord of men! The goddess assumed her form first. The beautiful lady went to Agni and said, 'O Agni! I am tormented by desire and you should satisfy my desire. O god! If you do not do this, know that I will kill myself. O Agni! I am the wife of Angiras and my name is Shiva. I have decided to come here after consulting my friends.'[247] Agni asked, 'How did you know that I was suffering from desire? How did all the others, the beloved wives of the saptarshis, come to know this?' Shiva said, 'You have always been our beloved. But we were afraid of you. Now that we have got to know about your desire through signs, they have sent me to you. O Agni! I have come here to have intercourse with you. Now quickly satisfy the desire we feel. The mothers[248] are waiting for my return.' Extremely happy, Agni then lived with Shiva.

'"The goddess was pleased with this union and caught the semen in her hand. She thought, 'If people see this form in the forest, they will speak about the misdeeds of the wives of the brahmanas with Agni. Therefore, to prevent this, I will become a Garudi and will easily escape from this forest.'[249] She then became a Suparni and left the great forest. She saw Mount Shveta, covered extremely well with reeds. The mountain was guarded by extraordinary seven-hooded serpents, with poison in their eyes. It was populated by rakshasas, pishachas, masses of terrible demons, female rakshasas and many animals and birds. She quickly went to the mountain peak that was difficult of access. She then hurriedly hurled the semen into a golden well. Then the goddess assumed the forms of the other wives of the great-souled saptarshis and united with Agni. But she was not able to assume the celestial form of Arundhati,[250] because of her faithfulness towards her husband and because of the power of her austerities. O supreme among the Kuru lineage! Driven by desire, Svaha hurled Agni's semen into the well six times.

'"On the first day of the lunar fortnight, the energy of the semen that had fallen down gave birth to a son. He was worshipped by the rishis and because the semen had fallen down, he became Skanda.[251] He had six heads and twice that many ears. He had twelve eyes and twelve arms. But Kumara had one neck and one torso. The child assumed form on the second lunar day and became a child on the third lunar day. Guha's limbs were developed on the fourth lunar day. He was surrounded by a great mass of red clouds,

with lightning in them, and looked like the sun rising on a gigantic red cloud. He held a giant bow in his hands, which made the body hair stand up. For the destruction of the enemies of the gods, it was placed there by the slayer of Tripura.[252] Seizing that supreme bow, he roared with a great strength, and this terrified the three worlds, with all their mobile and immobile objects. The roar was like that of masses of giant clouds and on hearing this, the great nagas Chitra and Airavata jumped up. On seeing them fall, Agni's son, with radiance like that of the morning sun, grabbed them with two of his hands. He held a spear in another hand. The one with the gigantic form, supreme among strong ones, grasped a cock in one hand.[253] Having grasped the cock, the immensely strong one roared terribly and sported. The strong one grasped a supreme conch shell in two of his arms and blew on it, striking fear even among powerful beings. As he played repeatedly, he pounded the sky with two of his other hands. It seemed as if Mahasena was about to drink up the three worlds with his mouths. On the mountain peak, the one whose soul was infinite, looked like the sun's rays at the time of sunrise. The one whose valour was extraordinary sat on the mountain peak. The one whose soul was infinite looked at the directions with his many faces. He saw the different types of beings and roared again. On hearing those roars, many beings fell down. They were terrified and anxious and sought refuge with him. All the beings of different varnas sought refuge with the god whom the brahmanas dub the greatest of all great companions. Arising, the mighty-armed one comforted all beings. He then drew his bow and shot arrows at the great Mount Shveta. With those arrows, Mount Krouncha, the son of the Himalayas, was rent asunder. Through that breach, swans and vultures travel to Mount Meru. On being shattered, the mountain fell down, uttering terrible lamentations. On seeing it fall, other mountains also screamed miserably. The supremely strong one heard those piteous lamentations. But he was not moved. The one whose soul is infinite, raised his spear and roared. The great-souled one then hurled his great spear and swiftly cleft the terrible peak of Mount Shveta. Having been thus shattered, Mount Shveta was miserable. Frightened of the great-souled one, it left the earth and arose, with the other mountains. This pained the earth and it trembled on all sides. In distress, it sought refuge with Skanda and was made strong again. The mountains also worshipped him and returned to earth. The worlds now worship Skanda on the fifth day of shuklapaksha."'

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'Markandeya said, "However, the rishis were concerned about ensuring the welfare of the worlds. On seeing these extremely terrible portents of different kinds, they became anxious and performed tasks to pacify the worlds. The people who lived in Chitraratha forest averred, 'These great calamities have descended on us because Agni had intercourse with the wives of the saptarshis.' Others, who had seen the goddess leave in

the form of Garudi, said, 'You are responsible for this disaster.' No one knew that this deed had been done by Svaha. Having heard that Skanda was her son, Suparni slowly went to him and said, 'I am your mother.' On learning that an immensely energetic son had been born, the saptarshis abandoned their six wives, with the exception of the divine Arundhati. All the residents of the forest referred to him as the son of the six. O king! But Svaha repeatedly told the saptarshis, 'I know that he is my son. What is being said is not true.' After performing sacrifices for the saptarshis, the great sage Vishvamitra had followed Agni without being seen, when he had been tormented by desire. He knew everything, exactly as it had happened. Vishvamitra was the first to seek refuge with Kumara. He composed a celestial hymn of praise to Mahasena. The great sage performed all the thirteen birth and other rituals for Kumara.[254] He spoke about the greatness of the six-faced one, the virtues of the cock and the worship of the goddess Shakti and her companions. Vishvamitra performed rituals for the welfare of the world. Thus, the rishi Vishvamitra came to be loved by Kumara. The great sage came to know about Svaha's transformation of form and told all the sages that the women had not committed any crimes. But though they heard those details, all of them abandoned their wives.

'"On hearing about Skanda, the gods went and told Vasava, 'O Shakra! Skanda's strength cannot be tolerated. Kill him swiftly and without any delay. If you do not kill him now, he will become Indra. O Shakra! With his great strength, he will oppress the three worlds, us and you.' He replied to the ones who were miserable, 'This child is immensely strong. With his valour, he can destroy the creator of the worlds in battle. Let the mothers of the world now go to Skanda.[255] They have the power and the will to destroy him.' They[256] agreed to these words and went. But on seeing that his strength was unmatched, their faces became miserable. They thought that he was invincible and sought refuge with him. They told him, 'You are our son. We hold up the universe. Welcome all of us. We are overcome with affection for you. Our milk is flowing.' Mahasena worshipped them and complied with their wishes. Then the strongest of the strong saw his father Agni approach and together with the group of mothers, he[257] received his worship. He remained there with Mahasena, so as to protect him steadily. There was a lady among the mothers who had been created out of anger. She nursed Skanda like her own son, with a spear in her hand. She was the daughter of an ocean of blood and lived on blood. She embraced Mahasena and protected him like a son. Agni transformed himself into goat-faced Naigameya with many offspring.[258] He sported himself on the mountain with the child, as if with toys."'

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'Markandeya said, "The planets, the minor planets, the rishis and the mothers, all

radiant and led by Agni, with masses of attendants and many other terrible residents of heaven, established themselves around Mahasena, together with the groups of mothers. The lord of the gods wished for victory, but was unsure about victory.[259] He ascended Airavata's shoulders[260] and departed, together with the gods. Desiring victory over Mahasena, Indra travelled swiftly. The army of the gods was immensely radiant. It was terrible and extremely fast. It was adorned with colourful flags and decorations and had many vehicles and bows. It was dressed in beautiful garments and was adorned and served by prosperity. When Kumara saw Shakra advance, with the desire of killing him, he advanced. The immensely strong Shakra roared and advanced swiftly. This delighted the army of the gods, who wished to kill Agni's son. Worshipped by the thirty gods and the supreme rishis, Vasava approached near Kartikeya. Together with the gods, the lord of the gods roared like a lion. On hearing this sound, Guha roared like the ocean. On hearing this great sound, the splendid army of the gods lost its senses. It was agitated, like the ocean by a storm.

'"Having seen that the gods had approached with the desire of killing him, Agni's son was angered. He belched forth large flames of fire from his mouth. They burnt the army of the gods and made them writhe on the ground. The heads and the bodies were in flames and the arms and the mounts were ablaze. They looked like radiant clusters of stars that had suddenly been dislodged. Having been burnt, the gods abandoned the wielder of the vajra and sought refuge with Agni's son, thus obtaining peace. Having been deserted by the gods, Shakra hurled his vajra at Skanda. O great king! This split open Skanda's right side. When the side of the great-souled Skanda was split from the force of the vajra, another being was born. He was a youth, decorated in gold. He was clad in celestial earrings and wielded a spear. Since he was created from the entering of the vajra, he was known as Vishakha.[261] On seeing another one arise, like the fire of destruction, Indra was frightened. He joined his hands in salutation and sought refuge with Skanda. O excellent one! Skanda granted him safety, together with his army. The thirty gods were delighted and played on their musical instruments."'

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'Markandeya said, "Now hear about Skanda's companions. They were terrible and extraordinary. They were born when Skanda was struck by the vajra and are the minor Kumaras. These terrible ones steal children, whether they have been born or whether they are in the womb. From the force of the vajra, immensely strong daughters were also born from him. The Kumaras thought of Vishakha as their father. The illustrious one protects in battle, with the face of a goat. He is surrounded by the masses of daughters and all his own sons. While the mothers look on, Bhadrashakha[262] provides succour. So people on earth call Skanda the father of sons. In different regions, those who wish sons

or have sons, always worship Rudra, Agni and the extremely strong Uma as Svaha.

'"The maidens who the fire named Tapas had begotten, went to Skanda and he asked, 'What will I do?' The mothers replied, 'Grant us this favour. May we be the supreme mothers of all the worlds. May we be worshipped. Do this for our pleasure.' He replied that it would be this way. Then that great-souled one again said, 'You will be of different kinds, auspicious and inauspicious.' Thus, having fulfilled the resolution of making Skanda their son, the group of mothers went away. Kaki, Halima, Rudra, Brihali, Arya, Palala and Mitra became the seven mothers of children who have just been born. Through Skanda's favours, each of them had a terrible son, named Shishu,[263] full of valour and red in the eye. Those who were born from Skanda's group of mothers are known as the eight brave ones.[264] Together with the one who has the face of a goat,[265] they are referred to as the nine. O king! Know that the sixth of Skanda's six heads has the face of a goat and is always worshipped by the group of mothers. The chief among his six heads is known as Bhadrashakha. It is through this that he created divine energy. All these incidents occurred on the fifth day of shuklapaksha. O lord of men! The extremely terrible war transpired on the sixth."'

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'Markandeya said, "Skanda was seated, with golden armour. He wore a golden crest and crown. His eyes were golden and he was immensely radiant. His garments were tinged with red. His teeth were sharp and he was beautiful. He possessed all the auspicious marks. He was the beloved of the three worlds. He was the granter of boons. He was brave. He was young. He was adorned with earrings. In the form of an embodied lotus, Shri herself worshipped him. When the greatly famous Kumara was thus united with Shri, all the beings saw him, like the moon on the night of the full moon. The great-souled brahmanas worshipped the extremely powerful one.

'"The maharshis spoke to Skanda in these words. 'O fortunate one! O one with the golden complexion! May you be the saviour of the worlds. Though you have been born in six nights,[266] the worlds have been subdued by you. O supreme among gods! You have granted them freedom from fear again. You should therefore become Indra and free the three worlds from their fear.' Skanda asked, 'O ones rich in austerities! What does the Indra of all the worlds do? How does the lord of the gods always protect the masses of gods?' The rishis replied, 'Indra grants beings strength, energy, offspring and happiness. When he is satisfied, the lord of the gods grants everyone their shares. He withdraws it from those who perform evil deeds and grants it to those who perform good ones. The destroyer of Bala assigns beings to their tasks. He acts as the sun when there is no sun, and as the moon when there is no moon. He becomes the fire, the wind, the earth and the water and their origins. These are Indra's tasks and Indra's strength is

immense. You are brave and you are supreme in strength. Therefore, you should be our Indra.' Shakra said, 'O mighty-armed one! O excellent one! You become Indra and bring happiness to everyone. You are a worthy one and we will instate you today.' Skanda replied, 'You alone will rule over the three worlds, fixed on victory. O Shakra! I will remain as your servant. I do not desire to become Indra.'

'"Shakra said, 'O brave one! Your strength is extraordinary. Kill the enemies of the gods. Amazed at your prowess, the worlds will ignore me. O brave one! Though I am established as Indra, I am inferior in strength and have been vanquished. Incessantly, they will attempt to bring about false dissension among us. O lord! When you have been separated, the world will be divided into two factions. The beings of the worlds will then decide to split into these two sides. O immensely strong one! Because of this division of beings, there will be strife then. O son![267] Let me assure you that you will then vanquish me in battle. Therefore, you should become Indra. Do not think about this.' Skanda answered, 'O fortunate one! You are my king, as well as of the three worlds. O Shakra! What can I do for you? Tell me what your instructions are.' Shakra said, 'O Skanda! If you have spoken true words according to your decision, and if you wish to follow my instructions, then listen to me. O immensely strong one! Be instated as the general of the gods. O immensely strong one! Following your words, I will remain as Indra.' Skanda answered, 'For the destruction of the danavas, for accomplishing the objectives of the gods, for the protection of cows and brahmanas, then instate me as the general.' So Maghavan,[268] together with all the masses of gods, instated him. He looked extremely handsome and was worshipped by the maharshis. The golden umbrella[269] sparkled like the circle of a fire that has been kindled well. Vishvakarma had created a golden and celestial garland. The slayer of Tripura[270] fastened this on him. O tiger among men! O scorcher of enemies! He himself arrived, with the famous goddess.[271] Extremely happily, the illustrious Vrishadhvaja[272] showed him homage. The brahmanas also refer to Agni as Rudra and he is thus Rudra's son. The semen secreted by Rudra became Mount Shveta. It was on Mount Shveta that the Krittikas placed Agni's semen.[273] All the residents of heaven saw Rudra offer homage to Guha, foremost among those who possess all the qualities. So he came to be known as Rudra's son. The child was born after Rudra entered Agni. Because he was born in this way, he became Rudra's son. It was thus that Skanda, foremost among the gods, was born as Rudra's son, through the energy of Rudra, Agni, Svaha and the six ladies.

'"Agni's son was attired in a pair of red garments that had no dust. His blazing body shone, like the sun attired in a pair of red clouds. Agni gave him a cock and that became his ornamental sign.[274] Perched on his chariot, it blazed like the red fire of destruction. His body was cased in armour that he had naturally been born with. It is always visible when the god goes into battle. O lord of the people! With Skanda, power, dharma,

energy, beauty, truthfulness, devotion to brahmanas, lack of delusion, protection of devotees, destruction of enemies and protection of the worlds were also born. Having been thus instated by the masses of all the gods, in his ornaments, he looked happy and satisfied. His visage was as radiant as the full moon. Pavaki[275] was thus instated by the gods. The sounds of hymns from the Vedas, celestial music, the songs of the gods and the gandharvas and all the masses of apsaras arose. He sported, surrounded by many who were happy, satisfied and ornamented. Thus instated by the residents of heaven, Mahasena could be seen, like the rising sun when darkness has been destroyed. At that, thousands of armies of the gods came to him from all the directions and said that he was their lord. The illustrious one was surrounded by masses of all the beings. He was worshipped and praised and comforted them.

'"Having instated Skanda as the general, Shatakratu remembered Devasena, whom he had once freed. 'Brahma himself must have destined that he will be her husband.' Thinking this, the slayer of Bala fetched Devasena, adorned in her ornaments and told Skanda, 'O supreme among gods! Even before you were born, the self-creating one[276] destined this maiden to be your wife. Therefore, in accordance with the prescribed rites and to the chanting of mantras, accept her hand. The right hand of this goddess is like a lotus. Accept it.' Having been thus addressed, he accepted her hand, in accordance with the prescribed rites. Brihasapati recited the prescribed mantras and offered oblations. Thus, wise ones know Devasena to be Skanda's queen. The brahmanas know her as Shashthi, Lakshmi, Asha, Sukhaprada, Sinivali, Kuhu, Sadvritti and Aparajita. When Devasena obtained Skanda as her eternal husband, the goddess Lakshmi herself sought refuge with him, in embodied form.[277] Since Skanda was united with Shri on the fifth lunar day, this is known as Shripanchami.[278] He accomplished his objective on the sixth and this is known as the great *tithi* of *shashthi*."'[279]

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'Markandeya said, "When Mahasena was united with Shri and became the general of the gods,[280] the six goddesses who were the wives of the saptarshis came to him. They had been abandoned by the rishis, though they were devoted to dharma and were great in their vows. They swiftly went to the lord who was the general of the gods and said, 'O son! Without any reason and driven by anger, our divine husbands have abandoned us. O son! We have been dislodged from our pure positions. It is said that someone reported we gave birth to you and they heard this falsehood. You should save us. O lord! Through your favours, we should attain eternal heaven. We wish that you should be our son. When you do this, you will be freed from your debt.' Skanda replied, 'O unblemished ones! You are truly my mothers and I am your son. You will obtain everything that you have asked for.' When this had been said, he[281] asked Shakra, 'What should be done?'

Asked thus by Skanda, Vasava replied, 'Abhijit is Rohini's younger sister, but is proud.[282] The goddess wishes to be the eldest and has gone to the forest to perform austerities. O fortunate one! I am bewildered, because a nakshatra has been dislodged from the sky. O Skanda! Consult with Brahma about that excellent time.[283] Brahma determined the time for Dhanishtha and the others. Rohini was the first and their number used to be complete.' Having been thus addressed by Shakra, the Krittikas went to heaven. This nakshatra is presided over by the god of fire and shines in the form of a cart.[284]

'"Vinata[285] told Skanda, 'You are my son and you are entitled to offer me funeral oblations. O son! I wish to live with you always.' Skanda replied, 'I bow before you. Let it be that way. Instruct me with a mother's affection. O goddess! Worshipped by your daughter-in-law, you will always live here.' Then the entire group of mothers spoke to Skanda in these words. 'The wise ones have praised us as the mothers of all the worlds. But we wish to be your mother. Therefore, show us honour.' Skanda replied, 'You will be my mothers and I will be your son. Tell me what I should do to satisfy your wishes.' The mothers said, 'In earlier times, others had been thought of as mothers of the world. Let us have that position and let them no longer have that position. O bull among gods! Let us be worshipped by the world, not them. Because of you, we have been deprived of our offspring.[286] Give them back to us.' Skanda replied, 'You cannot wish for offspring that have already been given away. But if you so wish, I can give you other offspring.' The mothers said, 'While we are with you, we wish to devour the offspring of those mothers.[287] Give them to us. They and their gods are different from you.' Skanda replied, 'I can give you offspring. But what you have asked for will be extremely painful. O fortunate ones! Protect the offspring as long as they are good and show you homage.' The mothers said, 'O fortunate one! O Skanda! As you desire, we will protect the offspring. O Skanda! O lord! If it pleases you, we wish to live with you always.' Skanda replied, 'In different forms, afflict the offspring of young humans until they have attained sixteen years of age. I will give you undecaying and terrible souls. With these, you will live in supreme happiness and also be worshipped a lot.' At that, an extremely strong being, golden in complexion, sprung up from Skanda's body to devour the offspring of humans. Oppressed by hunger, it suddenly fell down on the ground, unconscious.

'"With Skanda's permission, it became a *graha*,[288] terrible in form. Supreme brahmanas know it by the name of Skandapasmara.[289] The extremely terrible Vinata is known as the graha Shakuni. The rakshasa woman Putana is known by the learned as the graha Putana. She is terrible in form. She is fearful in form. She causes great pain and roams around in the night. The pishacha woman who is terrible in form is known as Shitaputana. Her form is fearful and she steals embryos from women. Aditi is known as

Revati and her graha is known as Raivata. This extremely terrible and gigantic graha afflicts children. Diti, the mother of the daityas, is known as Mukhamandika. This inaccessible demoness happily feeds on the flesh of children. The Kumaras and the Kumaris are said to have been created from Skanda. O Kouravya! They are extremely large grahas and all of them devour embryos. They[290] are known as the husbands of the Kumaris. They are terrible in deeds, and without it being known, they snatch small children. O king! The wise know Surabhi to be the mother of cattle. Shakuni rides on her, and with her, devours children on earth. O lord of men! The goddess Sarama is the mother of dogs. She always robs the embryos of women. The mother of trees resides in a *karanja*.[291] Men who wish to have sons worship her in the karanja. These eighteen grahas, and others, are fond of meat and liquor.[292] They always live for ten nights in places where delivery takes place. Assuming a subtle form, Kadru enters a woman who is pregnant. She devours the embryo there and she[293] gives birth to a serpent instead.[294] The mother of gandharvas grasps the embryo and departs. On earth, that woman is seen as one whose foetus has vanished. The mother of apsaras grasps the embryo and sits and the learned refer to this as a foetus that is seated.[295] The daughter of the ocean of blood is known as Skanda's nurse. In a kadamba tree, she is worshipped by the name of Lohitayani.[296] Arya dwells among women, the way Rudra resides in men. Kumara's mother Arya is separately worshipped for the fulfilment of desires.

'"I have thus recounted for you the great grahas of the Kumaras. They are inauspicious up to sixteen years of age. After that, they turn auspicious. The listed group of mothers and the male grahas are always known by everyone as Skanda grahas, residing in the body. They are pacified through oblations, bathing, incense, collyrium, sacrifices and gifts, especially rites for Skanda. When thus worshipped and offered homage properly, all of them bestow welfare, long lives and energy on men. O Indra among kings! After worshipping Maheshvara, I will now recount the grahas that afflict men beyond the sixteenth year. The man who sees gods, whether asleep or awake, swiftly turns mad and the learned know this as *devagraha*. The man who sees his ancestors, whether seated or asleep, swiftly turns mad and this is known as *pitrigraha*. He who disrespects the siddhas angers them and is cursed by them, swiftly turning mad, and this is known as siddhagraha. He who inhales fragrances and tastes different flavours, swiftly turns mad and this is known as rakshasagraha. A man on earth who is touched by celestial gandharvas, swiftly turns mad and this is known as gandharvagraha. Over a period of time, a man who is entered by yakshas, swiftly turns mad and this is known as yakshagraha. A man who is always ascended by pishachas, swiftly turns mad and this is known as pishachagraha. A man whose mind is deluded and turbulent because of these evils, swiftly turns mad, and must be cured in accordance with the sacred texts. Men swiftly turn mad because of perplexity, fear and terrible sights, and must be cured

through rites. There are three types of grahas—some are frolicsome, others are gluttons, and others are lustful. They afflict men until the attainment of seventy years of age. After that, fever is the equivalent of a graha for men. Grahas always avoid those who have not dispersed their senses and those who are controlled, pure and always attentive, and also those who believe in god and are devoted. This is the description of grahas that afflict men. Grahas do not touch men who are devoted to the god Maheshvara."'

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'Markandeya said, "When Skanda had done all this, to please the mothers, Svaha appeared before him and said, 'You are the son born from my womb. I wish that you should give me happiness that is extremely difficult to obtain.' Skanda replied to her, 'What kind of bliss do you wish for?' Svaha said, 'O mighty-armed one! I am Daksha's beloved daughter and my name is Svaha. Ever since I was a child, I have always desired Agni. O son! But the fire does not completely know how much I love him. O son! I wish to reside eternally with Agni.' Skanda replied, 'O goddess! Whatever oblations are properly offered to gods and ancestors by brahmanas, with the recital of mantras and through Agni, will henceforth be rendered with the utterance of the word "svaha". O beautiful one! Thus, you will always reside with Agni.' Having been thus addressed and worshipped by Skanda, Svaha was satisfied. She was united with her husband Agni and offered homage to Skanda.

'"Then Prajapati Brahma told Mahasena, 'Go to your father Mahadeva, the destroyer of Tripura. For the welfare of the worlds, you have been born invincible, with Rudra entering Agni and Uma entering Svaha. The great-souled Rudra moistened Uma's vagina with his semen. This was thrown on the mountain and created Minjika and Minjika.[297] The remaining semen flowed into the red river.[298] Other parts ascended into the rays of the sun and others fell on the earth. Still others adhered to the trees. Thus, it fell in five ways.[299] The wise ones know your terrible companions of many different forms, the eaters of flesh, as ganas.' Mahasena agreed and the one whose soul was immeasurable, worshipped his father Maheshvara, and he in turn was affectionate towards his son. Those who wish to acquire riches should worship the five ganas with *arka* flowers and worship them if they wish diseases to be cured.[300] Those who wish to ensure welfare for children should always worship Minjika and Minjika,[301] generated from Rudra. Those who wish to obtain offspring should bow in obeisance before the divine women named Vriddhikas, who were born from trees and eat human flesh. Thus is known the innumerable masses of pishachas. O king! Now learn from me about the origins of the bells and the pennants. Airavata[302] had two bells known as Vaijayanti. The intelligent Shakra brought them himself and gave them to Guha. One of those bells was for Vishakha and the other for Skanda. The pennants of both Kartikeya and

Vishakha are red. The immensely strong god Mahasena played happily with these toys, given to him by the gods. Surrounded by the masses of pishachas and the masses of gods, he was radiant on that golden mountain, blazing with prosperity. With that brave one, the mountain and its pure groves was radiant, like the beautiful caverns of Mandara with the rays of the sun. Mount Shveta was radiant with groves blossoming with *samtanaka* flowers,[303] groves of karaviras,[304] groves of parijatas, *japa*s,[305] groves of ashokas, clusters of kadamba trees, masses of divine animals and masses of divine birds. All the masses of gods and all the devarshis were there. The clouds thundered like drums, like the sound of the turbulent ocean. The celestial gandharvas danced there, together with the apsaras. The great sound of happy beings was heard there. Thus the entire universe, together with Indra, gathered on Mount Shveta and happily beheld Skanda, not tired of looking."'

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'Markandeya said, "When Agni's illustrious son was instated as the general, the radiant lord Hara[306] was delighted and left for Bhadravata[307] in a chariot that had the complexion of the sun, together with Parvati. One thousand lions were yoked to that supreme chariot. Driven by destiny, it ascended into the bright firmament. It seemed to drink up the sky and terrified mobile and immobile objects. Those lions with handsome manes roared and went up to the sky. Pashupati was resplendent, seated on that chariot, together with Uma. It looked like the sun amidst clouds thick with lightning and Indra's bow.[308] The illustrious Naravahana, lord of riches,[309] together with the guhyakas, advanced in front on the beautiful Pushpaka. Behind Vrishadhvaja, the granter of boons, Shakra followed, ascended on Airavata, accompanied by the gods. The great yaksha Amogha was on the right side, with *jambhaka*s,[310] yakshas and rakshasas adorned with garlands. Also on the right advanced the gods, the Maruts, armed with many different weapons, together with the Vasus and accompanied by the Rudras.[311] Yama, together with Mrityu,[312] terrible in form, advanced, surrounded on all sides by hundreds of terrible diseases. Behind Yama followed Rudra's beautiful, sharp and decorated trident, by the name of Vijaya. There was also the illustrious Varuna, lord of the ocean, advancing slowly with his terrible noose and surrounded by innumerable aquatic animals. Vijaya was followed by Rudra's spear, with maces, clubs, lances and several other supreme weapons. O king! The spear was followed by Rudra's extremely radiant umbrella and his water pot,[313] served by masses of maharshis. On the right was his radiant staff, accompanied by Shri, with Bhrigu, Angiras[314] and the gods worshipping it. Behind these was Rudra on his unblemished chariot, gladdening all the gods with his energy. The rishis, the gods, the gandharvas, the serpents, female rivers,

male rivers, trees, masses of apsaras, nakshatras, planets, the children of the gods and different types of women followed Rudra at the rear. The lovely and beautiful women scattered showers of flowers. Parjanjya followed, worshipping the wielder of the pinaka.[315] Soma[316] held a white umbrella over his head. Agni and Vayu held whisks on either side. O king! Shakra was behind them, accompanied by Shri and all the rajarshis, singing praises of Vrishadhvaja.[317] Gouri, Vidya, Gandhari, Keshini and Mitrasahrya—all of them followed Parvati at the rear, together with Savitri. The different branches of knowledge, created by those who are wise and recited by Indra and the other gods, were in the vanguard. The rakshasas and grahas, holding pennants, were in front, as was Rudra's friend Pingala, the Indra of the yakshas, who ensures happiness to the world and is always busy in burning grounds. Accompanied by all these, the god happily travelled. His course was not certain. He was sometimes in the front, and sometimes at the back. Those on earth worship the god Rudra through good deeds, using the name Shiva. He is also known as Isha, Rudra and Pinaki. Maheshvara is worshipped with all kinds of objects. Thus, Krittika's son, the general of the gods and with the qualities of a brahmana, followed the lord of the gods, surrounded by the army of the gods.

'"Then Mahadeva spoke words of great import to Mahasena. 'Always, steadfastly, protect the seventh corps of the Maruts.' Skanda replied, 'O lord! I will protect the seventh corps of the Maruts. O god! Tell me quickly what else I should do.' Rudra said, 'O son! You will always see me in every task you undertake. By looking at me devotedly, you will ensure supreme welfare.' Having said this, Maheshvara embraced him and gave him permission to leave. O great king! When Skanda was allowed to go, a great portent suddenly appeared. To bewilder all the gods, the firmament, with all its nakshatras, blazed. The earth trembled and groaned. The entire universe was enveloped in darkness. On witnessing this terror, Shankara[318] was disturbed. So were the immensely fortunate Uma and the gods, together with the maharshis. While they stood around in bewilderment, a great army appeared. It was like a mass of mountains or rain clouds. It was terrible to see and had many weapons. This terrible army roared and uttered diverse sounds. It advanced towards the illustrious Shankara and the gods to do battle. They hurled many showers of arrows on them, and mountains, *shatagnis*,[319] javelins, clubs and maces. From that great and terrible shower of weapons, the entire army of the gods was scattered in an instant and was seen to waver. Oppressed by the danavas, the army of the gods was mauled. The soldiers, the elephants and the horses were sliced down. The weapons and the maharathas were shattered. They were killed by the asuras, like a grove by many fires. It fell down burnt, like a forest full of large trees. The gods were mowed down, heads severed from bodies. They were slaughtered in that great battle and were without a protector. On seeing the army destroyed, the god

Purandara, the slayer of Bala, spoke comfortingly to the army that was oppressed by the danavas. 'O fortunate ones! O brave ones! Discard your fear. Grasp your weapons. Set your minds on valour. Do not be disheartened. Vanquish the extremely evil danavas, terrible in form. O fortunate ones! Attack those great asuras with me.' Having heard Shakra's words, the residents of heaven were comforted. Seeking refuge with Shakra, they attacked the danavas. Then all the thirty gods, the immensely strong Maruts and the Sadhyas, together with the Vasus, returned the attack with great force. The weapons that they angrily unleashed on the armies in battle, and the arrows, drunk up large quantities of blood from the daityas. The sharp arrows pierced their bodies, which could be seen to fall down, like serpents from a mountain. O king! The bodies of the daityas were sliced by the arrows and fell down on the ground everywhere, like shredded clouds. In that battle, attacked by all the masses of gods with their diverse arrows, the army of the danavas was terrified and retreated. On seeing this, all the gods raised their weapons. There was great rejoicing and the sounding of many musical instruments. Thus an extremely terrible and fearful battle raged between the gods and the danavas, creating muck out of flesh and blood.

'"But suddenly those from the world of the gods were seen to be worsted. The terrible danavas slaughtered the residents of heaven. The chiefs among the danavas uttered terrible roars like lions. They sounded their musical instruments and there was a great noise from their kettledrums. An extremely strong and terrible danava emerged from the army of the daityas then. His name was Mahisha and he grasped a giant mountain. He looked like the sun, surrounded by dense clouds. O king! On seeing him raise the mountain, the gods fled. But Mahisha pursued the gods and flung the mountain. O king! The army of the gods was struck by that falling mountain, which was terrible in form. They were killed in large numbers and fell down on the ground. With the other danavas, Mahisha terrified the gods. He shattered them in battle, like a lion on small animals. On seeing Mahisha descend on them, Indra and the other gods fled from the field of battle. Their weapons and their pennants were strewn around. Then Mahisha was extremely angered and advanced towards Rudra's chariot. Approaching it, he seized the pole of Rudra's chariot. When the angry Mahisha suddenly seized Rudra's chariot, the sky and the earth groaned deeply and the maharshis fainted. Gigantic daityas, that were like clouds, roared. They were certain that they would triumph. But even in this state, the illustrious one[320] did not kill Mahisha in battle. He knew that the evil-minded one's death would be at Skanda's hands. The fearful Mahisha exulted at having seen Rudra's chariot. He roared, delighting the daityas and terrifying the gods.

'"When the gods confronted this terrible danger, Mahasena arrived. He flamed like the sun in his wrath. He was attired in red garments. He was adorned in red garlands and ornaments. His mouth was red. The mighty-armed lord was clad in golden armour. He was astride his chariot, golden in hue and like the sun. On seeing him, the army of the

daityas suddenly lost their hearts in battle. O Indra among kings! The immensely strong Mahasena hurled a flaming spear, which was capable of shattering, at Mahisha. Once unleashed, it struck Mahisha's gigantic head. The head was severed from the body and Mahisha fell down, having lost his life. He hurled that spear again and again, slaying enemies by the thousands. As the gods and the danavas looked on, it then returned to Skanda's hand. The residual masses of the terrible daitya army were mostly killed by the wise Mahasena with his arrows. They were frightened and terrified and Skanda's unassailable companions killed and devoured them in hundreds. They ate the danavas and drank their blood. In a short time, they exterminated all the danavas and began to rejoice. Like the sun destroys darkness, a fire destroys trees and the wind dispels clouds, the famous Skanda destroyed enemies through his own valour. He was shown homage by the thirty gods and he worshipped Maheshvara. The son of the Krittikas was resplendent, like the gorgeous sun amidst its rays. When the enemies were destroyed by Skanda and Maheshvara had left, Purandara embraced Mahasena and spoke to him. 'O Skanda! You have killed Mahisha, who had received a boon from Brahma. The gods were like straw to him. You are foremost among victorious ones. O mighty-armed one! You have destroyed the thorn of the gods. In battle, you have killed a hundred danavas who were the equals of Mahisha. You have slain the enemies of the gods, who had oppressed us earlier. Your followers have devoured hundreds of other danavas. You are as invincible in battle as the illustrious husband of Uma.[321] O god! This will be famous as your first deed. Your fame will be eternal in the three worlds. O son of a god! The gods will be under your suzerainty.' Having spoken these words to Mahasena, Shachi's husband[322] stopped. He took the permission of the illustrious Tryambaka[323] and left, together with the other gods. Rudra returned to Bhadravata. The gods returned. Rudra spoke to the gods, 'Regard Skanda as you regard me.' Having killed masses of danavas, Agni's son subjugated all the three worlds within a single day and was worshipped by the maharshis. He who attentively reads this account of Skanda's birth, obtains prosperity here and Skanda's world in the hereafter."'

Section Thirty-Eight

Droupadi–Satyabhama-sambada Parva

This parva has eighty-eight shlokas and three chapters.

Chapter 519(222): 59 shlokas
Chapter 520(223): 12 shlokas
Chapter 521(224): 17 shlokas

Sambada *means conversation and this short parva has a conversation between Droupadi and Satyabhama. Krishna and Satyabhama return to Dvaravati.*

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Vaishampayana said, 'When the brahmanas and the great-souled Pandavas were seated, Droupadi and Satyabhama entered together. They were extremely happy and seated themselves comfortably. O Indra among kings! They had seen each other after a long time. They were pleasant in speech and spoke to each other about the deeds of the kings from the Kuru and Yadu lineages. Then the slender-waisted Satyabhama, Krishna's beloved queen and the daughter of Satrajit, spoke to Yajnaseni in private. "O Droupadi! How do you conduct yourself when you attend to the Pandavas? Those brave and young ones are the equals of the guardians of the world. O beautiful one! How do you keep them under your control? O one who is beautiful to behold! The Pandavas are always under your control. They always look towards you and do your bidding. Tell me the reason. Do you follow vows or is it austerities? Is it ablutions, bathing, mantras or herbs? Is it the valour of knowledge or the valour of roots? Is it meditation, oblations or medicaments? O Panchali! O Krishna![1] Tell me about your famous knowledge of amorous matters, so that Krishna will always remain under my control." Having said this, the famous Satyabhama stopped.

'The immensely fortunate Droupadi, who was devoted to her husbands, replied. "O Satya! You are asking me about the practices of evil women. How can one praise those who travel along wicked paths? Such questions and uncertainties are not worthy of you. You yourself have enough intelligence. You are Krishna's beloved queen. When a husband learns that a woman uses mantras or roots, he becomes as terrified of her as of a snake that has entered the house. How can someone who is anxious find peace? How can there be happiness without peace? No woman is able to control her husband through mantras. Those who propagate roots are enemies. They are violent and transmit poison and extremely terrible diseases. When a man accepts these powders through the tongue or the skin, there is no doubt that he will soon be killed. Women

have caused dropsy, leprosy, old age, impotence, dumbness, blindness and deafness through these means. Addicted to wicked ways, these evil women cause great harm to their husbands. A woman should never act so as to cause displeasure to her husband. O illustrious Satyabhama! Listen. I will tell you everything about how I behave towards the great-souled Pandavas. I always avoid vanity, desire and anger. I always steadily serve the Pandavas and their wives.[2] In return for the love, I always place my soul in their souls. I always serve them without any sense of pride. I protect the hearts of my husbands, without being anxious about wrong words, wrong situations, wrong looks, difficult seats, difficult roads and difficult signs. That is the way I serve the maharatha Parthas, who are extremely terrible in their energy and are equal to the sun, the fire and the moon and who are capable of killing with their glances. My mind never turns to other men—be it a god, a man, a gandharva, a young one with ornaments, one who is rich or one who is handsome. I do not eat, bathe or sleep before my husband,[3] together with his servants, has performed these acts. When my husband returns home from the field, the forest or the village, I always get up to welcome him and offer him a seat and water. The stores for food are clean. The food is clean. I serve food at the right time. I am careful in maintaining the grain and ensure that the house is clean. I am direct and refined in speech. I do not consort with evil women. I always do that which is pleasant. I am never lazy. I do not laugh unless there is a joke. I do not tarry for a long time at the gate. I do not spend a long time in the toilet or in the garden. I do not laugh loudly or complain, or give cause for anger. O Satya! I am always engaged in steadfastly serving my husbands. In no way do I desire anything that does not bring my husband pleasure. When my husband is not at home because of some work connected with the relatives, I follow a vow of not using flowers or fragrances. When my husband does not drink or does not eat, neither do I. I always renounce everything that my husband does not enjoy. O beautiful one! I always base myself on what has been instructed. I am ornamented well. I am extremely careful. I am engaged in the pleasure of my husband. Earlier, my mother-in-law had told me about this dharma followed in the household—about offering alms, sacrifices, funeral ceremonies, cooking food on auspicious lunar days and everything else that should be respected. I know all that. I always follow them untiringly, day and night, with all my soul always fixed on humility and injunctions. My husbands are mild, righteous, truthful and the followers of true dharma. But I serve them as if they are angry and venomous serpents. It is my view that the eternal dharma of women is to be dependent on the husband. He is the god and he is the path. How can one cause him displeasure? I do not transgress my husbands in sleeping, eating or speech. I always control myself and never complain about my mother-in-law. O fortunate one! Through constant attention in daily pursuits and through servitude to the superiors, my husbands remain under my control. I always serve Kunti, the mother of brave ones and one who is always true in her words, myself—in her bathing, dressing

and eating. I never cross her in issues of garments, ornaments or food. Pritha[4] is the equal of the earth itself and I never complain about her. Earlier, in Yudhishthira's abode, eight thousand brahmanas were fed every day on golden plates. Eighty-eight thousand *snataka* householders[5] were supported by Yudhishthira, with thirty servant girls for each. Other than this, ten thousand ascetics, with their desire under control, were fed well-cooked food on golden plates. All those brahmanas were knowledgeable about the brahman and had been given grants of land. I worshipped them in due order, with drink, garments and food. The great-souled Kounteya possessed one hundred thousand servant girls. They were adorned with necklaces and bracelets made of shells, gold around their necks, ornaments, expensive garlands, gold and sandalwood paste and sported their gems and their gold. They were skilled in dancing and singing. I knew the names, the forms, the food and the garments of each of them and also their work, what each one did and did not do. Kunti's intelligent son had one thousand maid servants, who used to serve the guests day and night, holding vessels in their hands. When Yudhishthira lived in Indraprastha, he possessed one hundred thousand horses and one hundred thousand elephants. Such were the king's instructions when he ruled the earth. I listened to them and laid down the number and tasks for all the servants and everything that was done in the inner quarters. I knew everything about the cowherds and the shepherds, what they did and did not do. I knew everything about the king's revenue and expenditure. O fortunate one! I alone knew everything about the famous Pandavas. Those bulls among the Bharatas passed on everything about the household to me. O one with the beautiful face! That is the reason they were devoted to me. This load was incapable of being borne by someone who was evil in soul. I gave up all pleasure, day and night. That treasury of my husbands, who followed dharma, was such an ocean that even Varuna could not manage it. I alone knew about the store. I endured hunger and thirst, day and night. I attended to the Kouravyas, and day and night were the same for me. I was the first to rise from my bed. I was the last to lie down. O Satya! That has always been my practice. I know this to be the greatest technique of making husbands devoted to you. I have not followed the practices of evil women. Nor do I desire to do that." Having heard these words from Krishna, full of dharma, Satya honoured Panchali, whose conduct always abided by dharma, and said, "O Panchali! O Yajnaseni! I have been at fault. Pardon me. Among friends, it does happen that words are spoken in jest, without having been intended."'

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'Droupadi said, "I will tell you about a way that is without deceit, for capturing the heart of the husband. O friend! If you follow that true path, you will be able to restrain your husband from other women. O Satya! In all the worlds, with all their gods, there is

no god equal to the husband. You will obtain all your desires through his favours. But if he is angered, you will lose them. It is from there that you obtain offspring, various objects of desire, beds, seats, garments that are wonderful to see, garlands, fragrances, the world of heaven and extensive fame. Happiness cannot be obtained through easy means. It is through hardship that a virtuous woman finds happiness. Therefore, always worship Krishna with all your heart, love and affectionate deeds. Through beautiful seats, excellent garlands, various fragrances and prompt service, he will know that you love him and will himself embrace you with all his affection. When you hear your husband's voice at the gate, you must arise and stand in the middle of the house. When you see him enter, you must swiftly give him a seat. You must worship him with water for washing the feet. Send your servant girls away. Arise and do every task yourself. O Satya! Let Krishna know that you love and worship him with all your soul. When your husband says something in your presence, protect it as a secret, even if it is not a secret. If one of your co-wives reports it to Vasudeva, he might feel disenchanted with you. Through whatever means, you must invite for meals those whom your husband loves, those who are devoted to him and those who desire his welfare. But you must always distance yourself from his enemies and opponents, those who wish him ill and those who are evil and deceitful. If the man is intoxicated or distracted, control your mind and maintain silence. You should never spend a long time alone with your sons, Pradyumna and Samba. You should be friends with women who are born in noble lineages and those who are virtuous and without sin. You must avoid those who are wrathful, addicted to drink, addicted to food, thieves, evil and fickle. This is the glorious secret of love, which leads to heaven and ensures the destruction of enemies. Therefore, adorn yourself with expensive garlands, ornaments, unguents and pure fragrances and worship your husband."'

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Vaishampayana said, 'After having been seated with Markandeya, the other brahmanas and the great-souled Pandavas and spoken to them about pleasant subjects, Janardana Madhusudana took his leave in the appropriate way. Keshava ascended his chariot and asked for Satya. Then Satyabhama embraced Drupada's daughter and spoke these cordial words to her, as was in conformity with her affectionate sentiments. "O Krishna! May you not suffer from any anxiety or grief. May you not lie awake at night. You will win the earth when your husbands, who are the equals of the gods, subjugate it. You are good in conduct. You have the propitious marks. O black-eyed one! No one like you can confront difficulties for long. I have heard that it is certain that, together with your husbands, you will enjoy the earth, without any enemies and without any thorns. O Drupada's daughter! When the sons of Dhritarashtra have been killed and the enmity has been avenged, you will behold the earth, protected by Yudhishthira. You will soon

see those wives of the Kuru lineage, who, deluded by insolence, laughed at you when you left for banishment, in a state of despair. O Krishna! Know that all those who caused you misery, when you were in a situation that was unpleasant, will depart for Yama's abode. Your sons Prativindhya, the illustrious Sutasoma, Arjuna's son Shrutakarma, Nakula's son Shatanika and Shrutasena begotten by Sahadeva are all brave and skilled. Your sons are skilled in use of weapons. They are living happily with Abhimanyu in Dvaravati, a place they love. Like you, Subhadra loves them with all her soul. Without any conflict, she is affectionate towards them and has no worries on their account. Pradyumna's mother[6] loves them with all her soul. Keshava instructs them, with Bhanu[7] and the others. My father-in-law always looks after their food and attire. With Rama[8] and the others, all the Andhakas and Vrishnis are devoted towards them. O beautiful one! They love them as much as Praduymna." Having spoken these affectionate and kind words, pleasant to the mind, she made up her mind to leave and went towards Vasudeva's chariot. The beautiful Satyabhama, Krishna's queen, circumambulated Krishna[9] and ascended Shouri's[10] chariot. After he had smiled and comforted Droupadi, the best of the Yadu lineage, the scorcher of enemies, took his leave and left on those swift steeds.'

Section Thirty-Nine

Ghosha Yatra Parva

This parva has 519 shlokas and nineteen chapters.

Chapter 522(225): 31 shlokas
Chapter 523(226): 22 shlokas
Chapter 524(227): 24 shlokas
Chapter 525(228): 29 shlokas
Chapter 526(229): 29 shlokas
Chapter 527(230): 31 shlokas
Chapter 528(231): 21 shlokas
Chapter 529(232): 21 shlokas
Chapter 530(233): 21 shlokas
Chapter 531(234): 28 shlokas
Chapter 532(235): 25 shlokas
Chapter 533(236): 15 shlokas
Chapter 534(237): 15 shlokas
Chapter 535(238): 49 shlokas
Chapter 536(239): 26 shlokas
Chapter 537(240): 47 shlokas
Chapter 538(241): 37 shlokas
Chapter 539(242): 24 shlokas
Chapter 540(243): 24 shlokas

Ghosha *means a herdsman, as well as a station where cowherds assemble.* Yatra *means an expedition or invasion. This parva is named after an expedition the Kouravas undertake to see the ghoshas in Dvaitavana, where the Pandavas are residing. The Kouravas are captured by the gandharvas and are released by the Pandavas. At this insult, Duryodhana resolves to fast to death and is dissuaded. He returns to Hastinapura and performs a sacrifice.*

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Janamejaya asked, 'While those foremost among men lived in the forest, their bodies lean from the cold, the heat, the wind and the sun, they arrived at the lake and the sacred wood.[1] What did the Parthas do next?'

Vaishampayana said, 'When Pandu's sons arrived at the lake, they dismissed their people and gave them instructions. They then roamed through beautiful forests and mountains and regions that were along rivers. When those brave ones dwelt there, studying and engaged in austerities, many venerable ones, learned in the Vedas, came to visit them. Those foremost among men showed them homage. One day, a brahmana arrived to visit the Kurus. He was skilled in recounting tales. Having spent some time, he went as he willed to visit the king who was Vichitravirya's son.[2] Having been honoured by the aged king, supreme among the Kurus, he seated himself. On being asked, he began to recount stories about the sons of Dharma, Anila and Indra, and the

twins.[3] They were in difficulties. They were lean in their bodies from the wind and the heat. They were almost prostrate through terrible misery. Though she had the brave ones for her protectors, Krishna was like one without a protector and was overwhelmed through suffering.

'On hearing his words, the king who was Vichitravirya's son was disturbed and was flooded with compassion. He had learnt that the sons and grandsons of a king had been immersed in a river of difficulties in the forest. His inner soul was full of misery. His sighs were full of tears shed for the Parthas. He thought that he himself was responsible for everything. He collected himself in some fashion and spoke these words. "Dharmaraja is the eldest of my sons. How is it that the truthful Ajatashatru, pure and devoted to the conduct of aryas, must now sleep on the ground? He earlier used to sleep on beds covered with soft *ranku*[4] skin. He is like Indra and used to be awoken every day by the praises of minstrels and bards. Before night is over, he is now awoken from the bare ground by flocks of birds. Vrikodara is lean in the body from the wind and the sun. His limbs are full of wrath. His limbs do not deserve this. Before Krishna's eyes, how does he sleep on the earth, on the surface of the ground? Arjuna is delicate and intelligent. He is under the control of the king who is Dharma's son. But yet, with all his limbs in pain, it is certain that he will not sleep at night, overcome by anger. On seeing the twins, Krishna, Yudhishthira and Bhima, devoid of happiness, he will sigh like an energetic serpent and it is certain that he will not sleep at night, overcome by anger. Though deserving of happiness, the twins are wretched. Their forms are the equal of the gods. It is certain that they are disturbed and will spend the nights awake, restrained only because of dharma and truth. The son of the wind-god is strong and is equal to the wind-god in strength. It is certain that his terrible energy is restrained by dharma. It is certain that he sighs, suffering this in rage. Tossing and turning on the ground, he desires the death of my sons. He is restrained by truth and dharma. He is waiting for the time when he can overcome them in battle. Ajatashatru was vanquished through deceit and Duhshasana spoke harsh words to him then. They must have penetrated Vrikodara's limbs and consumed his inside, like a fire burns kindling. Dharma's son never thinks about evil deeds. Dhananjaya always follows him. But dwelling in the forest, Bhima's anger is increasing, like a fire fanned by the wind. He is being tormented by that rage. The brave one is kneading one hand with the other. He is heaving terrible and warm sighs, as if he wants to burn down my sons and grandsons. The wielder of the Gandiva and Vrikodara are like the fire at the time of destruction. With arrows that blaze like thunder, they leave no residue from the armies of enemies. Duryodhana, Shakuni, the son of the suta[5] and the extremely evil-minded Duhshasana only saw the honey. They did not see the fall, nor Vrikodara and Dhananjaya. Having performed good or evil deeds, a man awaits the fruits of the deed that has been done. But the fruits often bind him. How can a man be freed from that? When the field has been ploughed well and the

seed has been sown, when the god has rained at the right time, has it ever been seen that there is no fruit? I think that it is not possible without destiny. The Pandavas are always devoted to that which is right. But the one who knows the minds of dice[6] was not fair. Attached to my evil sons, neither was I. That became the fire of destruction for the Kurus. It is certain that the wind will blow, even if it is not instructed. It is certain that a woman who has conceived will give birth to offspring. It is certain that dawn signals the death of night and that evening signals the death of the day. Regardless of the acts performed by us and those performed by others, regardless of riches donated by men, when it comes to obtaining the fruits, what are the fruits one obtains? If nothing remains of deeds, why perform them? We protect our riches so that they are not divided, do not drain off, and are not eroded. If they are not protected, they would divide into a hundred parts. But it is certain that deeds are not destroyed in this world. Behold Dhananjaya's valour. From the forest, he went to Shakra's world. He obtained divine weapons of four kinds.[7] Having obtained the knowledge, he again returned to this world. Where is the man who has gone to heaven in his own body and desires to return again, unless he has seen the innumerable Kurus on the point of death, overcome by destiny? Arjuna Savyasachi is the wielder of the bow. The bow named Gandiva is the essence of the world. There are celestial weapons in his possession. Who can withstand the energy of those three?"[8] Having secretly heard these words of the king, Duryodhana and Soubala[9] were disturbed. They went to Karna and told him everything. The one with limited intelligence[10] was unhappy at what he had heard.'

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Vaishampayana said, 'Together with Soubala, Karna heard these words of Dhritarasthra. At an appropriate time, he spoke thus to Duryodhana. "O descendant of the Bharata lineage! You have exiled the brave Pandavas through your own valour. You now enjoy the earth alone, like the killer of Shambara in heaven.[11] O lord of men! O king! All the kings of the east, south, west and north pay tribute to you. The blazing Lakshmi used to serve the Pandavas earlier. O king! But with your brothers, you have now won her. O king! The blazing prosperity that we earlier saw, for a short time, with Yudhishthira in Indraprastha, is now with you and he is oppressed by sorrow. O king! You have snatched it from Yudhishthira with your intelligence and strength. O mighty-armed one! That radiance is seen to be with you now. O Indra among kings! O slayer of enemy warriors! All the kings are now established under your suzerainty and ask you what they should do. O king! The entire goddess earth is yours now—with the ocean as a garment, with mountains and forests, with villages, cities and mines, with many groves and countries, and adorned with habitations. O king! The brahmanas praise you and you are

worshipped by the kings for your manliness. You shine among them, like the one with the rays[12] among the gods in heaven. O king! Surrounded by the Kurus, you shine like King Yama amidst the Rudras, Maruts and Vasava,[13] like the king of the nakshatras.[14] Let us go and see the Pandavas, residing in the forest and bereft of prosperity. They always slighted you and never showed you respect. O great king! It is said that the Pandavas reside, together with the forest-dwelling brahmanas, near Lake Dvaitavana. O great king! Go there with your supreme prosperity and torment the sons of Pandu with your energy, like the sun. You are established in your kingdom and they have been dislodged from their kingdom. You have wealth and they are deprived of wealth. They are without prosperity and you are full of prosperity. O king! Go and see the sons of Pandu. Let the Pandavas behold you like Nahusha's son Yayati, with great splendour and established in great fortune. O lord of the earth! This prosperity, that well-wishers and ill-wishers see in a radiant man, is considered to be real power. Like a man who stands on a mountain and looks down on earth, what happiness can there be that is greater than being on plain ground while one's foes are on uneven terrain? O tiger among kings! The birth of a son or the obtaining of a kingdom does not bring as much bliss as seeing one's enemies in misery. What happiness will there not be, on being successful oneself, and on seeing Dhananjaya attired in bark and skins? Let your wives, attired in excellent garments, see the miserable Krishna, attired in bark and skins, and thereby increase her grief. Bereft of riches, let her criticize her own self and her life. She felt grief in the midst of the assembly hall. But on seeing your wives adorned in ornaments, the grief will be greater." O Janamejaya! Thus did Karna and Shakuni speak to the kings,[15] and having spoken, they fell silent.'

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Vaishampayana said, 'When King Duryodhana heard Karna's words, he was extremely delighted. But he again became sad and spoke these words. "O Karna! What you have told me has always been in my mind. But I will not obtain permission to go to where the Pandavas are. Dhritarashtra, lord of the earth, always mourns for those brave ones. Because of the power of their austerities, he considers the Pandavas to be superior. If the king gets to know about our desires, he will seek to protect the future and not grant us permission. O immensely radiant one! There can be no reason to go to Dvaitavana than to exterminate the enemies who are in the forest. At the time of gambling with the dice, you know the words Kshatta[16] addressed to me, you and Soubala. Thinking of all those words and the other lamentations, I cannot make up mind as to whether one should go or not go. I will obtain great pleasure if I see Bhima and Phalguna,[17] together with Krishna, miserable in the forest. The pleasure that I will get from winning the earth is less than that from seeing the sons of Pandu, clad in bark and skins. O Karna! What joy

can be greater than the sight of Drupada's daughter Droupadi, clad in red[18] garments in the forest? If Dharmaraja, Bhimasena and Pandava[19] see me united with this supreme prosperity, it is worth living. But I do not see a means whereby we can go to the forest, or a means whereby the king will give us permission to go. Therefore, together with Soubala and Duhshasana, find out a skilful means whereby we can go to the forest. After I have thought about whether one should go or not go, I will approach the king tomorrow. When I am seated with Bhishma, supreme among the Kurus, together with Soubala, you must propose the reason that you have thought of. Having heard the words of Bhishma and the king about going, I will then entreat the grandfather[20] and decide on the course of action." All of them agreed to this and returned to their houses.

'When night was over, Karna came to the king. Karna smilingly told Duryodhana, "O lord of men! A means has been found. Listen. O lord of men! All the ghoshas[21] are in Dvaitavana, awaiting you. There is no doubt that we can undertake an expedition to the ghoshas. O lord of the earth! It is always proper to go on a ghosha expedition. O king! If you tell your father this, he will grant you permission." While they were conversing in this fashion, having decided on the ghosha expedition, Shakuni, the king of Gandhara, smilingly replied. "I can see that this means of going is without any difficulties. The king will not only give us permission, he will press us to go. O lord of men! All the ghoshas in Dvaitavana are waiting for you. There is no doubt that we can go there on a ghosha expedition." All of them then laughed and offered each other their palms.[22] Having decided on this, they went to see the foremost among the Kurus.'

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Vaishampayana said, 'O Janamejaya! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Then they all went to Dhritarashtra and asked about the king's welfare, and the king asked about them in return. A cowherd named Samanga had been instructed earlier. He approached Dhritarashtra and told him about the cattle that were nearby. O lord of the earth! Then Radheya[23] and Shakuni spoke to Dhritarashtra, lord of men and the foremost among kings. "O Kourava! The ghoshas are in beautiful regions. The right time for branding the calves has arrived. O king! This is also an excellent time for your son to go on a hunt. Therefore, you should give Duryodhana permission to go." Dhritarashtra replied, "O son! Hunting and inspecting of cattle are worthy tasks. I remember that one should not trust cowherds completely. But I have heard that those tigers among men[24] are somewhere near. Therefore, I do not think that you should go there yourself. They were vanquished through deceit and now live in that great forest in misery. O Radheya! Those maharathas are capable and are always engaged in austerities. Dharmaraja is never angered. But Bhimasena is prone to anger. Yajnasena's daughter[25] is also full of fire.

Full of insolence and delusion, you are certain to commit a transgression and they will burn you down with the power of their austerities. Or the brave and armed ones may be overcome with anger. With swords that are girded and with energetic weapons, they will burn you down. Even if you succeed in harming them through force of numbers, that will not be the act of an arya. But I do not think this to be possible. The mighty-armed Dhananjaya has lived in Indra's world. Having obtained celestial weapons, he has returned to the forest. In earlier times, when he had not obtained these weapons, Bibhatsu[26] had conquered the earth. Having obtained the weapons, why should the maharatha not be able to kill you now? If you listen to my words once you have gone there, even then, there will be reason for anxiety and it will be a sojourn of unhappiness. Some soldiers of yours may cause injury to Yudhishthira. Even if the act has not been intended, the sin will be ascribed to you. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Therefore, let skilled men go there for the branding. I do not like the idea of your going there yourself." Shakuni said, "The eldest Pandava is learned in dharma. He has taken an oath in the assembly hall that he will live in the forest for twelve years. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! All the Pandavas follow him and are devoted to dharma. Kounteya Yudhishthira will never exhibit anger towards us. We are extremely desirous of going out on a hunt. We also wish to do the numbering.[27] We have no desire to see the Pandavas. There will be no conduct there that does not befit an arya. We will not go to the place that they have sought refuge in." Having been thus addressed by Shakuni, Dhritarashtra, the lord of men, reluctantly gave Duryodhana permission to go, together with his advisers.

'Having obtained permission, Gandhari's son,[28] foremost among the Bharatas, left with a large army, together with Karna, Duhshasana and Shakuni the dice player, and surrounded by his other brothers and thousands of women. When the mighty-armed one departed to see Lake Dvaitavana, all the citizens, together with their wives, followed him to the forest. There were eight thousand chariots, thirty thousand elephants, many thousands of infantry and nine thousand horses, carriages, shopping carts, whores, traders, bards and men who were skilled in hunting, in hundreds and thousands. O lord of the earth! The departure of the king raised a mighty roar, like the deep rumble of the winds during the rainy season. While headed towards Lake Dvaitavana, with all his mounts, King Duryodhana camped at a distance of one *gavyuti*.'[29]

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Vaishampayana said, 'King Duryodhana resided in that forest and eventually reaching the ghoshas, began to live there. His attendants constructed his house in a lovely spot that had water and large trees, with all the qualities. Nearby, they also constructed many houses for Karna, Shakuni and all his brothers. The king saw his cows, in

hundreds and thousands. He inspected them and had them all marked with numbers and brands. He had the calves marked and learnt which cows had given birth and which calves were young, so that the time for their weaning had not arrived. After having completed the task of counting and branding all calves that were three years old, the descendant of the Kuru lineage was surrounded by the cowherds and pleasured himself. As it pleased them, like the immortals, the citizens and soldiers in thousands sported in that forest. The cowherds were skilled in singing and knew the art of dancing and music. With their daughters, adorned in ornaments, they served Dhritarashtra's son. Surrounded by masses of women, the king was delighted and donated riches, food and many kinds of drink to them, according to what each one was worth. With all of them, he killed hyenas, buffaloes, deer, oxen,[30] bear and boar in every direction. With his arrows, he pierced elephants in that great forest. He captured deer in that beautiful region. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! He drank milk and enjoyed succulent fruit. He saw beautiful forests in bloom. They swarmed with intoxicated bees and noisy peacocks.

'In due course, he went to sacred Lake Dvaitavana. He went there with supreme prosperity, like the great Indra, the wielder of the vajra. O lord of the earth! It so happened that on the same day, Dharma's son, Yudhishthira, performed the *sadyaska* sacrifice[31] undertaken by rajarshis. The supreme among the Kurus observed the divine rite and tendered offerings from the forest. Having observed it, the wise Kourava, lord of men, went with Droupadi, his wife according to dharma, to the lake.

'O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Together with his younger brothers, Duryodhana instructed his servants to quickly construct pleasure houses. They said that they would act as Kouravya had asked them to. They went towards Lake Dvaitavana to build the pleasure houses. Having reached Lake Dvaitavana, the vanguard of the army of Dhritrarashtra's son was about to enter the forest, but was restrained at the gate by the gandharvas. O lord of the earth! O king! Surrounded by his masses, the king of the gandharvas had already arrived there from Kubera's abode. He was in the habit of sporting with masses of apsaras and the sons of the thirty gods and had therefore barred entry to the lake. O king! When the king's servants found that the lake had been barred, they returned to King Duryodhana. On hearing their words, Kouravya dispatched his war-crazy soldiers to evict the others. On hearing the words of the king, the soldiers in the vanguard went to Lake Dvaitavana and spoke to the gandharvas. "King Duryodhana, Dhritarashtra's strong son, has come here to sport. Leave this place." O lord of the earth! Having been thus addressed, the gandharvas laughed. They replied to those men in harsh words. "Your king Suyodhana is evil in his intelligence. How can he command us, as if we are his servants? We are inhabitants of heaven. There is no doubt that you are evil in wisdom, since you are heading towards death. You have lost your senses if you repeat his orders to us. All of you should swiftly go back to the Kourava

king. If you do not do that, you will depart today for Yama's abode." Having been thus addressed, the vanguard of the king's army rushed back to where the king, Dhritarashtra's son, was.'

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Vaishampayana said, 'O great king! All of them then went to Duryodhana. They told him what had been said about the Kourava. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Dhritarashtra's powerful son was filled with anger that his army had been restrained by the gandharvas. He told his soldiers, "Chastise the ones who do not follow dharma and dare to do that which brings me displeasure, even if Shatakratu and all the gods happen to be sporting there." On hearing Duryodhana's words, the immensely strong sons of Dhritarashtra and thousands of soldiers armed themselves for battle. Repulsing the gandharvas, they forcibly entered the forest. They filled the ten directions with giant roars, like those of lions. The gandharvas sought to restrain the Kuru soldiers. O lord of the earth! But though restrained by the gandharvas peacefully, they ignored those gandharvas and entered the great forest. When Dhritarashtra's sons and their servants did not stop, despite their words, they took to the sky and reported this to Chitrasena.[32] On hearing everything, the king of the gandharvas had the following to say about the Kouravas. In anger, Chitrasena said, "They do not behave like aryas. Punish them." O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Taking their leave of Chitrasena, all the gandharvas grasped weapons and rushed at the sons of Dhritarashtra.

'On seeing the gandharvas swiftly descend on them with raised weapons, the sons of Dhritarashtra could be seen to flee in all the directions. On seeing that the sons of Dhritarashtra were fleeing from the field of battle, the brave Vaikartana[33] was the only one who wasn't reluctant to do battle. On seeing the great army of gandharvas descend on him, Radheya repulsed them with a mighty shower of arrows. With great lightness of hand, the suta's son killed hundreds of gandharvas with *kshurapras*,[34] *vishikhas*,[35] *bhallas*,[36] *vatsadantas*[37] and iron arrows. The maharatha sliced off the heads of many gandharvas and in a short while, dispersed all of Chitrasena's army. Although the gandharvas were killed by the intelligent son of the suta, they returned again in hundreds and thousands. In a short instant, the earth was covered with gandharvas and Chitrasena's soldiers descended with great force. Then King Duryodhana, Shakuni Soubala, Duhshasana, Vikarna and other sons of Dhritarashtra ascended chariots that screeched like Garuda and began to kill those soldiers. They fought again, placing Karna at the forefront. There was the giant roar of chariots and the stamping of the feet of horses. Supporting Vaikartana, they repulsed the gandharvas. Then all the gandharvas descended on the Kouravas and the battle that raged was extremely terrible. It made the body hair stand up. Oppressed by the arrows, the gandharvas began to wilt. On seeing

that the gandharvas were suffering, the Kouravyas roared loudly. On seeing that the gandharvas were frightened, Chitrasena was overcome with anger. He angrily flew up from his seat, resolving to kill them. That brave one began to fight with weapons of maya, following wonderful paths. The Kouravyas were bewildered because of Chitrasena's maya. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! It seemed as if each one of Dhritrarashtra's sons was assailed and surrounded by ten gandharvas.

'O king! Being thus oppressed by a great army, they were frightened. They fled the field of battle and went to where King Yudhishthira was, seeking refuge with him. Everywhere, the soldiers of the sons of Dhritarashtra were being destroyed. O king! Vaikartana Karna was the only one who stood immobile like a mountain. Duryodhana, Karna and Shakuni Soubala were severely wounded in the field of battle, but kept fighting the gandharvas. With a desire to kill Karna in battle, hundreds and thousands of gandharvas rushed collectively towards him. With a desire to kill the son of the suta, the immensely strong ones surrounded him from all sides, with swords, javelins, spears and maces. Some sliced off the yoke,[38] others brought down the flagpole. Some brought down the shafts, the horses and the charioteer. Some sliced down the umbrella, others the fenders[39] and the diadem. In many thousands, the gandharvas shattered the chariot. Holding a sword and a shield in his hand, the son of the suta jumped down from the chariot. He leapt onto Vikarna's chariot and whipped the horses, so that he might escape.'

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Vaishampayana said, 'O great king! When maharatha Karna was routed by the gandharvas, in the sight of the sons of Dhritarashtra, the entire army fled. O great king! On seeing all the sons of Dhritarashtra flee, Duryodhana refused to run away. On seeing the great army of gandharvas descend on him, the scorcher of enemies unleashed a great shower of arrows. Without thinking about this shower of arrows, and desiring to kill Duryodhana, the gandharvas surrounded his chariot from all sides. They cut down the yoke, shafts, fenders, pennants, charioteer, horses, *trivenu*[40] and seat into pieces that were as small as sesame seeds. Duryodhana was thus unseated from the chariot and fell down on the ground. The mighty-armed Chitrasena rushed at him and captured him alive. O Indra among kings! When he had been thus captured, the gandharvas surrounded Duhshasana on his chariot and captured him too. With Chitrasena, others rushed at Vivimshati and still others at Vindu and Anuvindu and all the wives of the kings. The soldiers of Dhritrarashtra's sons were routed by the gandharvas.

'Together with the ones who had been wounded before, they then went to the Pandavas. When the king had been captured, all the wagons, shopping carts, whores, carriages and vehicles sought refuge with the Pandavas. Dhritarashtra's son was

handsome, mighty-armed and immensely strong. But the king was taken prisoner by the gandharvas and the Parthas pursued them. Duhshasana, Durvishaha, Durmukha and Durjaya[41] were captured and tied by the gandharvas, as were all the wives of the kings. When the king had been captured, Duryodhana's advisers were miserable. Lamenting in sorrow, all of them went to Yudhishthira. Bhimasena spoke to Duryodhana's aged advisers, who were grief-stricken and miserable and were begging Yudhishthira. "They[42] came here for a different purpose, but something else has transpired. The gandharvas have accomplished what we should have undertaken. O son![43] This is the outcome of the king listening to evil counsel and indulging in deceitful gambling. We have heard it said that others bring down the enemies of one who is impotent. The gandharvas have performed this extraordinary act before our eyes. We are fortunate that, in this world, there exist men who wish to do that which is pleasant for us and while we were seated, they have taken up our burden and made us happy. We have been suffering from the cold, the heat and the wind and have become emaciated through our austerities. The evil-minded one was comfortable and wished to see us in this state. Those who followed the conduct of that evil-souled Kouravya, the adherent of adharma, are witnessing their own defeat. It is because adharma was performed that this instruction is now being given. I am telling you. You can see that the Kounteyas are not violent or evil." When Kounteya Bhimasena was speaking in this way, the king[44] said that this was not the time for harsh words.'

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'Yudhishthira said, "O son![45] Why are you speaking in this way to the terrified Kouravas who have sought refuge with us? They are confronted with difficulties. O Vrikodara! Dissension and quarrels occur among those who are related by blood. While enmity continues, the dharma of the lineage is not destroyed. If a stranger not related by blood seeks to harm a lineage, those who are good do not tolerate that stranger's violence. The evil-minded one[46] knows that we have been residing here for some time. But he has ignored us and done something that is unpleasant for us. Through Duryodhana's forcible capture by the gandharva and through a stranger's oppression of the women, our lineage has been sullied. O tigers among men! For the sake of those who have sought refuge with us and to save the lineage, arise and get ready, without any delay. Let Arjuna, you, and the brave and invincible twins free Dhritarashtra's son, Suyodhana, from captivity. O tigers among men! These chariots are stocked with all the weapons. They have golden flags and are driven by Indrasena[47] and the other charioteers. O sons![48] Ride them and fight the gandharvas in battle. Ceaselessly endeavour to free Suyodhana. O Vrikodara! Every king will protect one who has come

for refuge, not to speak of someone as capable as you. Who can ignore cries for help and the sight of hands joined in salutation, even if it happens to be a certain enemy? O Pandava! Out of granting a boon, obtaining a kingdom, the birth of a son and freeing an enemy from misery, the last is superior to the other three. What can provide greater satisfaction to you than that Suyodhana should be in distress now and that his life depends on the strength of your arms? O Vrikodara! O brave one! There is no doubt that I myself would have rushed to help him, had the sacrifice not been going on.[49] O Bhima! O descendant of the Kuru lineage! Try all the different means of conciliation to free Suyodhana. If the king of the gandharvas does not return him through conciliation, free Suyodhana through mild use of your valour. O Bhima! But if the Kouravas are not released through a mild battle, use every means possible to crush those who are contrary. They must be freed. O Vrikodara! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! I am only capable of giving you instructions, as long as the sacrifice is going on."'

Vaishampayana said, 'Having heard these words of Ajatashatru,[50] Dhananjaya agreed to his senior's[51] words about freeing the Kouravas. Arjuna said, "If the gandharvas do not free the sons of Dhritarashtra through peaceful means, the earth will drink the blood of the king of the gandharvas." O king! Having heard the oath of the truthful Arjuna, the Kouravas took heart again.'

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Vaishampayana said, 'On hearing Yudhishthira's words, all the bulls among men, with Bhimasena at the forefront, arose with happy faces. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! All the maharathas clad themselves in impenetrable armour that was radiant with gold. They ascended chariots, all of which had pennants. With bows and arrows in their hands, the Pandavas blazed like the fire. Those chariots were equipped well and were yoked to swift steeds. Using those chariots, those tigers travelled fast. On seeing the maharatha sons of Pandu advance, the army of the Kouravas let out a great roar. The travellers of the sky[52] and the maharathas were not frightened and were flush with victory. In a short while, they encountered each other in that forest. All the gandharvas were flush at the prospect of victory. On seeing the four brave Pandavas advance into battle on their chariots and on seeing them as resplendent as the guardians of the worlds, the residents of Gandhamadana[53] established themselves in battle formations. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Remembering the words of the king who was Dharma's son, the first battle that was engaged was a mild one. But the soldiers of the king of the gandharvas were deluded in intelligence. They were incapable of realizing that something that was mild might benefit them.

'At that, Savyasachi, the invincible scorcher of enemies, addressed the travellers of the skies on the field of battle. "This is not an act that is worthy of the king of the

gandharvas, oppressing the wives of other men and consorting with humans. Free the extremely brave ones, the sons of Dhritarashtra. On the instructions of Dharmaraja, free their wives." On hearing the words of the famous Pandava, the gandharvas laughed. They replied to Partha in these words. "O son![54] There is only one person on earth whose instructions we obey. Under his rule, we roam around, without any anxiety. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! We do only what he commands us to do. Other than that lord of the gods, there is no one else who can command us." Having been thus addressed by the gandharvas, Kunti's son, Dhananjaya, replied to the gandharvas in these words. "O gandharvas! If you do not free the sons of Dhritarashtra through peaceful means, I will exhibit my valour and free Suyodhana myself." Having uttered these words, Partha Savyasachi Dhananjaya released sharp arrows, which travelled through the sky, at those roamers of the sky. The gandharvas were insolent of their strength and released a shower of arrows at the Pandavas, and the Pandavas did the same to those residents of heaven. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Thus began a terrible battle between the swift gandharvas and the immensely swift Pandavas.'

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Vaishampayana said, 'The gandharvas were bedecked with golden garlands and possessed celestial weapons. They enveloped them with blazing arrows from all the directions. There were four brave Pandavas and thousands of gandharvas. O king! They attacked each other in that battle and it was extraordinary. Just as the gandharvas had shattered the chariots of Karna and the sons of Dhritarashtra into a hundred pieces, they attempted to do it again. O king! Hundreds of gandharvas attacked them in that battle and the tigers among men repulsed them with many showers of arrows. Repulsed by showers of arrows in all the directions, those travellers of the sky could not approach near the sons of Pandu. On seeing that the gandharvas were angered, Arjuna used great and celestial weapons against them. In that war, insolent about his strength, Arjuna used his agneya weapon to send a million gandharvas to Yama's abode. O king! With his sharp arrows, Bhima, the great archer and supreme among strong ones in battle, killed hundreds of gandharvas. O king! Insolent of their strength, Madri's two sons fought and captured and killed hundreds of enemies. When the gandharvas were thus killed by the great-souled ones with celestial weapons, they took to the sky and took the sons of Dhritarashtra with them. But Kunti's son, Dhananjaya, saw them arise. He surrounded them on all sides with a great net of arrows. Having been tied down by that net of arrows, they were like birds in a cage. They angrily hurled showers of maces, spears and swords at Arjuna. But Dhananjaya pierced the bodies of the gandharvas with bhallas. Heads, legs and arms[55] fell down from above like a shower of rocks and the others took fright. When the gandharvas were being killed by the great-souled Pandava,

who was on the ground, they showered down arrows on him from the sky. But Savyasachi, the energetic scorcher of enemies, repulsed all of them with his own weapons and began to pierce the gandharvas. Arjuna, the descendant of the Kuru lineage, unleashed his weapons—*sthunakarna, indrajala, soura,* agneya and *soumya.*[56] The gandharvas were burnt up by the arrows of Kunti's son. They were in supreme despondence, like the daityas at Shakra's hands. When they tried to escape upwards, his net of arrows restrained them. When they tried to slither away, Savyasachi restrained them with his bhallas.

'O descendant of the Bharata lineage! On seeing the gandharvas terrified by Kunti's intelligent son, Chitrasena grasped a mace and rushed towards Savyasachi. In that battle, he held the iron mace in his hand. But with his arrows, Partha sliced the mace into seven pieces. On seeing that the mace had been cut into many pieces by the arrows of the nimble one, he[57] made himself invisible and began to fight with Pandava. Established in the sky, he repulsed those celestial weapons. The powerful king of the gandharvas hid himself through his powers of maya. Arjuna saw that he was invisible and was striking. He therefore attacked him with divine weapons that could travel in the sky, invoked with mantras. Arjuna was angered. Dhananjaya used the weapon known as *shabdabheda*[58] and restrained his disappearance into many different forms. Pierced by the weapons of the great-souled Arjuna, the gandharva revealed himself to his beloved friend.[59] On seeing his friend Chitrasena, fighting feebly in battle,[60] the bull among the Pandavas withdrew the weapon he had released. When all the other Pandavas saw that Dhananjaya had withdrawn his weapons, they too restrained their swift steeds and their bows and arrows. Chitrasena, Bhima, Savyasachi and the twins then asked about each other's welfare, while they were astride their respective chariots.'

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Vaishampayana said, 'Then the great archer and immensely radiant Arjuna smiled and spoke to Chitrasena in the midst of the gandharva soldiers. "O brave one! Why did you decide to chastise the Kouravas? Why did you capture Suyodhana with his wives?" Chitrasena replied, "O Dhananjaya! The great-souled god resides here.[61] He knows the motives of the evil-souled Duryodhana and the evil Karna. Knowing that you were residing in the forest and suffering, though you did not deserve it, they came here to see you and the famous Droupadi. On learning their intentions, the lord of the gods told me, 'Go and bind Duryodhana and his advisers. Bring them here. Protect Dhananjaya and his brothers in battle. The Pandava is your beloved friend and your student.' On the instructions of the king of the gods, I swiftly came here. The evil one has been tied up and I will go to the abode of the gods." Arjuna replied, "O Chitrasena! Suyodhana is our brother. If you wish to do that which brings me pleasure, set him free. Those are

Dharmaraja's instructions." Chitrasena said, "He is evil and is always mean. He does not deserve to be freed. O Dhananjaya! He has deceived Dharmaraja and Krishna.[62] Kunti's son, Dharmaraja, great in his vows, does not know why he decided to come here. After hearing the reason, do what you wish." Then all of them went to King Yudhishthira. Having gone there, they told him about all his[63] evil deeds.

'Having heard the words of the gandharva, Ajatashatru praised the gandharva and said that all of them should be set free. "It is fortunate that despite your strength and might, none of you has injured the evil sons of Dhritarashtra, or their advisers, kin and relatives.[64] O father![65] This is a great favour that the travellers of the sky have done to me. Because the evil-souled one has been freed, the honour of the lineage has not been tainted. I am delighted at having seen you. Tell me what your instructions are. Having obtained everything that you wish for, return swiftly." Thus, the gandharvas took their leave of the intelligent son of Pandu. Extremely delighted, they left with the apsaras, with Chitrasena at the forefront. With a divine shower of ambrosia,[66] the king of the gods revived the gandharvas who had been killed in the battle with the Kouravas. Having performed the difficult task of setting their relatives and all the wives of the kings free, the Pandavas were extremely pleased. The maharathas were honoured by the Kurus and their wives and sons. Amidst the Kurus, the great-souled ones were as resplendent as the fire. Having freed Duryodhana, together with his brothers, Yudhishthira lovingly told him, "O son![67] Never commit such rashness again. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! One who is rash never comes to a happy end. O descendant of the Kuru lineage! Return safely with all your brothers. If it pleases you, without any despondency, return to your houses." Having been thus given permission by the Pandava, King Duryodhana was overcome with shame and returned to his city. With the Kouravya gone, Kunti's son, Yudhishthira, was honoured by the brahmanas, together with his brave brothers. Surrounded by the ones rich in austerities, like Shakra amidst the immortals, he pleasured himself happily in Dvaitavana.'

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Janamejaya said, 'He was vanquished and bound by his enemies in battle. Later, he was freed by the great-souled Pandavas. The extremely evil-souled Duryodhana was always boastful, insolent and proud. He always looked down upon the manliness and generosity of the Pandavas. It seems to me that the wicked one's entry into Hastinapura must have been difficult. He must have been overcome by shame and sorrow. His heart must have been full of grief. O Vaishampayana! Recount in detail his entry.'

Vaishampayana said, 'Dhritarashtra's son, Suyodhana, was given his leave by Dharmaraja. His face was lowered in shame. He was extremely miserable. He returned

slowly. The king left for his city, followed by four components of his army.[68] On the way, there was a region that was full of excellent grass and water. He set his vehicles free there. As he wished, he camped in an auspicious and beautiful spot of ground. In due order, his elephants, horses, chariots and infantry were stationed around him. The king seated himself on a couch that was like the fire in its radiance. He looked like the moon, eclipsed by Rahu. When night was over, Karna came to Duryodhana and spoke to him. "O son of Gandhari! It is fortunate that you are alive and fortunate that we have met again. It is fortunate that you have vanquished the gandharvas, who are capable of assuming any form at will. O descendant of the Kuru lineage! It is fortunate that I see all of your brothers. They are maharathas and have been victorious, triumphing over the enemies in battle. While you looked on, I was worsted by all those gandharvas. My own army was routed and I was incapable of ensuring that they remained there. I was sorely wounded by the arrows and hard-pressed. I ran away. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! I think it is extraordinary that I see you here, without harm and without injury, and with all your wives, riches and vehicles. You have freed yourself from that superhuman battle. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! O great king! There is no other man in this world who is like you, or can achieve what you have done in battle with your brothers." O king! Having been thus addressed by Karna, King Duryodhana lowered his head and spoke in a voice that was choked with tears.'

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'Duryodhana said, "O Radheya![69] I do not take offence at your words, because you do not know what transpired. You think that I defeated the gandharva enemies through my energy. O mighty-armed one! My brothers and I did fight with the gandharvas for a long time and there was destruction on both sides. But when those brave ones fought with the use of maya, the battle with the travellers of the sky was no longer equal. We then encountered defeat in the battle and were taken captive, together with the servants, advisers, wives, riches and vehicles. We were then extremely miserable and were abducted by them through the sky. Then, miserable, some of our advisers and soldiers went to the maharatha Pandavas and sought refuge. 'King Duryodhana, Dhritarashtra's son, together with his younger brothers and his advisers and wives, is being carried away through the sky by the gandharvas. O fortunate ones! Please free the king and his wives. Otherwise, all the wives of the Kuru lineage will suffer a lot.'[70] The eldest of Pandu's sons has dharma in his soul. Having been thus addressed, he pacified his brothers and ordered them to free us. The Pandavas, bulls among men, went to that spot. Though they were capable, the maharathas tried conciliation first. But though they were conciliatory, the gandharvas did not free us. Then, insolent in their strength, Arjuna, Bhima and the twins unleashed many showers of arrows at the gandharvas. At

that, all of them[71] gave up the fight and fled to the sky, though dragging our miserable selves along in delight. I then saw Dhananjaya, surrounded by nets of arrows on all sides, release his superhuman weapons. All the directions could be seen to be enveloped by the Pandava's sharp arrows. Chitrasena, Dhananjaya's friend, showed himself and he and the Pandava, scorcher of enemies, embraced each other. They asked each other about their welfare. On meeting each other, they discarded their armour and arms. The brave gandharvas mixed freely with the Pandavas. Chitrasena and Dhananjaya displayed each other honours."'

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'Duryodhana said, "When he met Chitrasena, Arjuna smiled. The scorcher of enemies spoke these words, which weren't those of an impotent one. 'O brave one! O supreme among gandharvas! You should release our brothers. They should not be oppressed as long as the sons of Pandu are alive.' O Karna! Having been thus addressed by the great-souled Pandava, the gandharva revealed the reason why we had come—to see the Pandavas and their wife in misery, devoid of happiness. When the gandharva revealed this through his words, I wished to enter a hole in the earth in shame. Together with the Pandavas, the gandharva then went to Yudhishthira and told him about our plans, handing us over to him in bonds. What greater misery can there be than being offered to Yudhishthira, miserable and tied, under the control of the enemy, and in the sight of the women? They have always been persecuted by me. They have always been my enemies. They set me free. I am evil-minded indeed, that I owe my life to them. O brave one! It would have been better had I encountered my death in that great battle, than to obtain my life in this way. Had I been killed by the gandharvas, my fame would have been recounted on earth. In Indra's world, I would have obtained the sacred worlds of eternal bliss. O bull among men! Listen to what I have now resolved to do. I will remain here and fast to death. The rest of you return home. Let all my brothers also return to the city now and also my well-wishers and relatives, with Karna and the others. With Duhshasana at the forefront, let them return to the city. Humiliated by the enemy, I will not return to the city. I used to rob the enemy of his honour and earn respect for my well-wishers. I have now inflicted sorrow on my well-wishers and have increased the delight of my enemies. Having returned to Varanahrya,[72] what will I tell the king? What will Bhishma, Drona, Kripa, Drona's son,[73] Vidura, Sanjaya, Bahlika, Somadatta, the others who are honoured by the elders, the brahmanas, the chiefs of the various professions and those who are strangers, have to say to me? What will I reply to them? So far, I have stood on the heads of my enemies and have trod on their chests. Through my own sins, I have now been dislodged. What will I tell them? Insolent ones may obtain prosperity, learning and riches. But like me, because they are intoxicated by

insolence, they cannot maintain that fortune for long. Out of my foolishness, I have committed an evil act. I was deluded by my own evil intelligence. That is the reason why I am confronted with this calamity. I will therefore fast to death. I am incapable of living any longer. No one with spirit wishes to remain alive after an enemy has saved him from a calamity. I am proud, but have lost my manliness. The enemy has laughed at me. The Pandavas have great valour and have looked down at me with disrespect."'

Vaishampayana said, 'While he was thinking in this way, he spoke these words to Duhshasana. "O Duhshasana! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Listen to my words. You are being instated as a king by me and accept this. Protected by Karna and Soubala, rule over this extensive earth. Protect your brothers as confidently as the slayer of Vritra[74] protects the Maruts. Just as the gods earn a living from Shatakratu, let your relatives earn a living from you. Without any deviation, always provide livelihood to brahmanas. Always be the refuge for your relatives and well-wishers. Just as Vishnu looks after the masses of gods, look after the relatives. Protect the seniors. Go and govern the earth. Gladden all your well-wishers and chastise the enemies." Embracing him[75] by the neck, he asked him to go. On hearing these words, Duhshasana was miserable. He was extremely sorrowful and his words were choked with tears. He joined his hands in salutation. In a broken voice, he told his elder brother to relent. His heart burnt and he prostrated himself on the ground. In sorrow, he shed tears on his[76] feet and the tiger among men said, "This cannot be. The earth with its mountains can be shattered. They sky can be splintered. The sun can lose its light. The moon can lose its cool. The wind can lose its speed. The Himalayas can begin to walk. The water of the ocean may be dried up. The fire can lose its head. O king! But I will not govern the earth without you." He repeatedly spoke words asking him to relent. "In our lineage, you alone will be the king for one hundred years." He touched the feet of his elder brother, who deserved to be honoured by him.

'On seeing Duhshasana and Suyodhana in grief, Karna, who was himself miserable, approached and said, "O Kouravyas! Why are you overcome by childish grief, like two ordinary people? Sorrow can never be driven away through grieving. Grieving never alters the state of the one who is sorrowful. What will be gained through this lamentation? Get a grip on your own selves. Do not delight the enemies through this sorrow. O king! The Pandavas performed their duty in freeing you. Those who reside within a king's dominions, must always do that which is pleasant for him. Under your protection, the Pandavas have resided without any anxiety. You should not grieve like an ordinary person. Your brothers are despondent because you have decided to fast to death. O fortunate one! Arise and move around. Comfort your brothers. O king! I do not understand your present foolish conduct. O brave one! O destroyer of enemies! What is surprising in the Pandavas setting you free, when you were in the clutches of your enemies? O Kouravya! Those who live within the kingdom, especially those who are

soldiers, must act for the pleasure of the king, whether they are known to him or not. It often happens that the foremost among men, capable of crushing enemy armies, are captured on the field of battle and are freed by ordinary soldiers. Men who are soldiers and reside within a king's dominions, must appropriately endeavour to accomplish the king's objectives. O king! The Pandavas live in your kingdom. Even if they have freed you now, what is the reason for this lamentation? O king! O supreme among kings! When you marched out with your army, what is improper is that the Pandavas did not follow you at the back. They are brave and powerful. But they withdrew from the field of battle, though they had earlier become your possessions in the assembly hall. You are enjoying the riches of the Pandavas. But look at the Pandavas. They are still powerful and are not fasting to death. O king! O fortunate one! Arise! You should not think about this. Those who live within a king's boundaries must do pleasant things for the king. Why should one lament about that? O Indra among kings! Listen to my words. O destroyer of enemies! If you do not act in accordance with them, I will stay here at your feet and serve you. O bull among men! Without you, I do not desire to live. O king! If you decide to fast to death, all the other kings will laugh at you." Having been thus addressed by Karna, King Duryodhana still decided not to rise, having set his mind on going to heaven.'

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Vaishampayana said, 'King Duryodhana was intolerant and was still determined to fast to death. O king! Shakuni Soubala spoke gently to him. "O Kourava! You have heard what Karna has told you and his words are right. Out of delusion, why should you throw away the riches that I obtained for you? O supreme among kings! Like a foolish one, why do you desire to give up your life? It seems to me that you have never visited the elders.[77] If one does not control sudden happiness or unhappiness, even if one obtains prosperity, it is destroyed, like an unbaked vessel in water. A king who is extremely timid, extremely impotent, procrastinating, absent-minded and addicted to the senses—is not served by prosperity. You have been served by a good act. Why do you exhibit this contrary sentiment of sorrow? You should not destroy the good act of the Parthas by resorting to this sorrow. You should reward the good act of the Pandavas by being happy. O Indra among kings! Instead, you are sorrowing and acting in a contrary way. Be gracious and do not give up your life. Be satisfied and remember the good deed. Return the kingdom to the Parthas and earn fame and dharma. By performing this act, you will show your gratitude. Be fraternal towards the Pandavas and give them their places again. You will be happy if you return the ancestral kingdom to them." Having heard Shakuni's words, and glancing with brotherly affection at Duhshasana prostrate at his feet, who was brave but was now acting timidly, he embraced Duhshasana, the scorcher of enemies, with his well-formed arms and raised him. He lovingly smelt the

fragrance of his head.

'King Duryodhana was already sorrowful. Having heard Karna and Soubala's words, he was overcome with shame and became extremely despondent. Having heard his well-wishers, he angrily said, "I am no longer concerned with dharma, riches, friendship, prosperity or acts of pleasure. Do not be frustrated. Leave. I have made up my mind that I will fast to death. All of you return to the city and show honour to my superiors." But they replied to the king who was the destroyer of his enemies. "O Indra among kings! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The path that you traverse is also ours. How can we return to the city without you?" He was addressed in many different ways by his well-wishers, advisers, brothers and relatives. But he had made up his mind and would not waver. In accordance with his resolution, Dhritarashtra's son spread *darbha* on the ground.[78] He purified himself by touching water and sat down on the ground. He was attired in rags and a garment made of kusha and established himself in the supreme rite. The tiger among kings maintained silence. He was desirous of going to heaven. He controlled his mind and cut himself off from the external world.

'On learning of his resolve, the daityas and the danavas, the terrible denizens of the nether regions, who had earlier been defeated by the gods, knew that their own side would be weakened because of Duryodhana.[79] They performed a sacrifice so as to summon him. They were skilled in mantras and pronounced mantras uttered by Brihaspati and Ushanas. They performed the rites mentioned in the Atharva Veda and the Upanishads, those that were capable of being performed through mantras and prayers. There were brahmanas who were learned in the Vedas and the Vedangas and extremely firm in their vows. Extremely attentively, they uttered mantras and poured offerings of milk into the fire. When those rites were completed, Kritya arose from the fire.[80] O king! She was extremely wonderful and had a gaping mouth. "What must I do?" she asked. Extremely happy in their souls, the daityas told her, "The king who is Dhritarashtra's son is fasting to death. Bring him here." Thus commanded, Kritya agreed that she would do this, and departed. In an instant, she went to where King Suyodhana was. She grasped the king and entered the nether regions.[81] Within an instant, she brought him and handed him over to the danavas. On seeing that the king had been brought, the danavas assembled at night. All of them were delighted in their minds and their eyes were dilated in delight. They then spoke these proud words to Duryodhana.'

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'The danavas said, "O Suyodhana! O Indra among kings! O extender of the Bharata lineage! You are always surrounded by brave and great-souled ones. Why have you resorted to this rash deed of fasting to death? Suicide always brings a person down and ill words are spoken about such a person. Intelligent ones like you should never embark

on contrary tasks that strike at the roots of their best interests. Restrain this resolution. O king! This is destructive of dharma, artha and happiness. It kills fame, power and fortitude and increases the happiness of the enemies. O lord! O king! Hear the truth about your divine origins and how this body of yours came to be created. Then resort to fortitude. O king! In ancient times, through our austerities, we obtained you from Maheshvara.[82] O unblemished one! The upper part of your body has been made from a collection of vajras and is impenetrable to every type of weapon.[83] The lower part was created by the goddess[84] herself, out of flowers, and its handsome form is attractive to women. O supreme among kings! O tiger among kings! Thus, your body was created both by Ishvara and by the goddess. You are divine, not human. There are extremely valorous kshatriyas, with Bhagadatta at the forefront. They are brave and skilled in the use of divine weapons and will kill your enemies. Therefore, do not grieve. There is no reason for fear. To aid you, many brave danavas have been born on earth. Other asuras will penetrate Bhishma, Drona and Kripa. Possessed by them, they will discard their kindness and fight with your enemies. O supreme among Kurus! When the danavas have possessed their inner souls, they will cast aside all affection and kill everyone in battle—sons, brothers, fathers, relatives, students, kin, young and old. Those tigers among men will be deluded through ignorance. They will be driven by the dictates of destiny. Their minds will be dark and they will discard all love. They will gleefully tell each other, 'You will not escape with your life.' They will establish themselves in their manliness and release every kind of weapon.[85] Priding themselves, those foremost ones among the Kurus will destroy a large number of people. The great-souled Pandavas will be capable of fighting back. Those greatly strong ones are favoured by destiny. O king! They will kill masses of daityas and rakshasas who have been born in the wombs of kshatriyas and who will fight with your enemies with clubs, maces, swords and missiles.[86] O brave one! Whatever fear there exists in your heart about Arjuna, for that too, we have devised a means for Arjuna. The soul of Naraka, who had been killed, has entered Karna. O brave one! Because of that enmity, he will fight Keshava and Arjuna.[87] Karna is supreme among warriors. He is proud in battle. That maharatha will defeat Partha and all the enemies in battle. The wielder of the vajra[88] knows this. To protect Savyasachi, he will rob Karna of his earrings and armour. But there are hundreds and thousands of daityas with us. We have also appointed rakshasas by the name of *samshaptakas*.[89] Those famous ones will kill the brave Arjuna. Do not sorrow. O king! This entire earth will be yours, without any rivals. Do not resort to despondency. That is not worthy of you. O Kourava! If you are destroyed, our side will be weakened. O brave one! Depart. You should never direct your intelligence towards any other task. You are our recourse, just as the Pandavas are of the gods."'

Vaishampayana said, 'Having thus addressed him, the daityas then embraced that

elephant among kings. Like a son, the bulls among the danavas consoled that invincible one. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! They steadied his intelligence with loving words. Then they gave him permission to leave, saying, "Go," and "Be victorious." When he had obtained permission, Kritya again brought the mighty-armed one back to the spot where he had decided to fast unto death. Having placed the brave one down and having honoured him, Kritya took his permission to leave and instantly disappeared. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! When she had disappeared, King Duryodhana thought that it had all been a dream. But a thought always remained with him. "I will vanquish the sons of Pandu in battle." Suyodhana thought that Karna and the samshaptakas had been given the task of killing of Partha, the slayer of enemies, and that they were capable of this. O bull among the Bharata lineage! Thus did resolution harden in Dhritarashtra's evil-minded son, about defeating the Pandavas. Karna's mind and soul had been possessed by Naraka's soul. This turned his mind towards the cruel task of killing Arjuna. Various rakshasas possessed the intelligence of the brave samshaptakas. They were overtaken by rajas and tamas[90] and wished to kill Phalguna.[91] The minds of Bhishma, Drona, Kripa and the others were taken over by the danavas. O lord of the earth! They were no longer as affectionate towards the sons of Pandu. But King Suyodhana did not tell anyone this. When the night was over, Karna Vaikartana smiled at King Duryodhana, and joining his hands in salutation, spoke words full of reason to him. "No one who is dead can defeat his enemies. Only those who are alive witness fortune. O Kouravya! How does a dead one obtain fortune? Where is the victory? This is not the time for despondency, fear or death." He then embraced the mighty-armed one with his arms and said, "O king! Arise. O destroyer of enemies! Why are you lying down? Why are you sorrowing? How can you desire to die when the enemy has been tormented through your valour? Or if fear has been engendered at the sight of Arjuna's valour, I truly promise that I will kill Arjuna in battle. O lord of men! When thirteen years have elapsed, I swear on my weapons that I will bring the Parthas under your subjugation." Having been thus addressed by Karna, remembering the words of the daityas and witnessing the prostrations of the others, Suyodhana arose. Having heard the words of the daityas, he adopted a firm resolution in his heart. The tiger among men asked his army to be prepared, with many chariots, elephants, horses and large numbers of infantry. O king! The great army marched like the waves of the Ganga. It had white umbrellas and pennants and extremely white whisks. It was extremely radiant with chariots, elephants and infantry, like the sky when the thick clouds have disappeared and autumn is yet to arrive. Indras among brahmanas pronounced benedictions of victory over him and praised him like an emperor. With hands joined in salutation, Dhritarashtra's son, the lord of men, received the homage of garlands. O Indra among kings! Blazing in supreme prosperity, Suyodhana was in the front, together with Karna and the dice-player Soubala.

Beginning with Duhshasana, all his other brothers were there, and Bhurishravas, Somadatta and the great king Bahlika. The extenders of the Kuru lineage followed that lion among kings on many types of chariots, horses and excellent elephants. O king! In a short while, they entered their own city.'

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Janamejaya asked, 'O excellent one! When the great-souled Parthas lived in the forest, what did the sons of Dhritarashtra, great archers, do? What about Karna Vaikartana, the immensely strong Shakuni, Bhishma, Drona and Kripa? You should tell me all this.'

Vaishampayana said, 'O great king! When the Parthas had left in that way and Suyodhana had been freed by the sons of Pandu and had returned to Hastinapura, Bhishma spoke these words to Dhritarasthra's son.[92] "O son![93] I had told you earlier, when you had intended to go to the forest of ascetics, that I did not like the idea of the trip. But you went despite that. O brave one! You were then forcibly taken captive by the enemies. You were freed by the virtuous Pandavas. But you still have no shame. O Gandhari's son! O lord of the earth! In your sight and in the presence of your army, the suta's son[94] was frightened of the gandharvas and fled from the field of battle. O Indra among kings! O son of a king! While you and your soldiers cried in distress, you witnessed the valour of the great-souled Pandavas and that of the mighty-armed and evil-minded Karna, the son of a suta. O supreme among kings! Whether it is in knowledge of arms, valour, dharma or devotion to dharma, Karna is not worth a small part of the Pandavas. O foremost among those who strive for peace! Therefore, for the welfare of this lineage, I think that peace with the great-souled Pandavas is desirable." O king! Having heard Bhishma's words, Dhritarashtra's son, the lord of men, laughed and abruptly departed with Soubala.

'On seeing him leave, Karna, Duhshasana and the other mighty archers followed the immensely strong son of Dhirtarashtra. O king! Having seen them depart, Bhishma, the grandfather of the Kurus, lowered his head in shame and left for his own house. O great king! When Bhishma had gone, Dhritarashtra's son, the lord of men, returned to that spot again and consulted with his advisers. "What is the best course of action for us? What is left to be done? How should we act now?"[95] O descendant of the Bharata lineage! He sought advice thus. Karna replied, "O Duryodhana! O Kourava! Listen to what I have to say. O destroyer of enemies! Having listened to it, act accordingly. O brave one! O supreme among kings! The earth is yours now, without any rivals. O great-minded one! With your enemies killed, protect it like Shakra." Having been thus addressed by Karna, the king again spoke to Karna. "O bull among men! Nothing can be unattained by one who has someone like you. You are my aide and you are always ready to serve me. I will now tell you about my intention. Listen to it attentively. O son

of a suta! On witnessing the great and supreme *rajasuya* sacrifice of the Pandavas, I am filled with the desire of undertaking it and satisfy my wishes.” Having been thus addressed, Karna spoke to the king. “O supreme among kings! All the lords of the earth have now been brought under your subjugation. Summon the foremost among brahmanas and collect offerings, in accordance with the prescribed rites. O best of the Kuru lineage! Let all the ingredients and requirements for the sacrifice be collected. O king! O destroyer of enemies! Let the summoned officiating priests, learned in the Vedas, perform the rites in accordance with the sacred texts. O bull among the Bharata lineage! Let your great sacrifice have plenty to eat and drink and let it also be extremely prosperous, with all the qualities.” O lord of the earth! Having been thus addressed by Karna, Dhritarashtra’s son summoned the priest and spoke these words to him. “Arrange for rajasuya, the best of sacrifices, with the best of dakshina, and according to all the rites in the proper order.” Having been thus addressed by the king, the bull among brahmanas replied. “O best of Kouravas! O supreme among kings! That best of sacrifices cannot be performed in your lineage as long as Yudhishthira is alive. O king! Your father Dhritarashtra, with a long life, is also alive. O supreme among kings! Because of these reasons, you cannot perform this sacrifice. O lord! However, there is another great sacrifice that is equal to the rajasuya. O Indra among kings! Listen to my words and perform that sacrifice. O king! All the lords of the earth who pay you tribute, will bring tributes of gold, worked and unworked. O supreme among kings! With this, you must have a plough constructed. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Plough the sacrificial ground with this. O foremost among kings! Let a sacrifice be organized there, well arranged and with plenty of food. Without obstructions in any direction, let it be held there, in accordance with the rites. This sacrifice has the name of Vaishnava and is familiar to all righteous ones. No one except the ancient Vishnu has ever performed it. This great sacrifice is the equal of rajasuya, supreme among sacrifices. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! This is attractive to us and will ensure your welfare. Let it be performed without obstructions and your desires will be fruitful.” Having been thus addressed by the brahmanas, Dhritarashtra’s son, the lord of the earth, spoke to Karna, Soubala and his brothers. “There is no doubt that the words of the brahmanas are attractive to me. If they are attractive to you, let me know that, without any delay.” Having been thus addressed, all of them agreed to what the king had said. Then, in due order, the king gave instructions to the appointed people. He instructed all the artisans to construct the plough. O best of kings! Everything that he had instructed was carried out in the due order.’

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Vaishampayana said, ‘Then the artisans, all the chief advisers and the immensely wise Vidura spoke to Dhritarashtra’s son. “O king! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The

time for the supreme sacrifice has arrived. The extremely expensive plough, made out of gold, has been constructed." O lord of the earth! On hearing this, Dhritarashtra's son, foremost among kings, instructed the kings that the king of sacrifices should be initiated. Then the sacrifice, well designed and with many ingredients, was started. Gandhari's son was consecrated, in due order, in accordance with the sacred texts. Dhritarashtra, the immensely famous Vidura, Bhishma, Drona, Kripa, Karna and Gandhari's famous son were delighted. O Indra among kings! Swift messengers were dispatched to invite the kings and the brahmanas. As instructed, the messengers ascended on swift mounts.

'Duhshasana spoke to a messenger who was about to start. "Go swiftly to Dvaitavana and invite the Pandavas, evil men, in accordance with what is prescribed, and also the brahmanas who are in that great forest." He went to where the Pandavas resided. Bowing down to them, he said, "O great king![96] Duryodhana, supreme among kings, is observing a sacrifice. He is supreme among the Kurus and has acquired a lot of riches through his own valour. The kings and brahmanas are going there from all directions. O king! I have been sent here by the great-souled Kourava, with an invitation from the king who is Dhritarashtra's son and is the lord of men. O king! He loves that sacrifice and you should come and witness it." On hearing the messenger's message, King Yudhishthira, tiger among kings, replied. "It is fortunate that King Suyodhana is performing the foremost of sacrifices. He will extend the deeds of his ancestors. We will go there, but we cannot do that now. We will have to abide by our oath until thirteen years have passed." Hearing Dharmaraja's words, Bhima said, "Dharmaraja Yudhishthira will go when that king has been hurled into a flaming fire lit with weapons and missiles.[97] When thirteen years have passed, the king who is Dhritarashtra's son will be offered as oblation into the fire of war by the angry Pandavas. We will then come. Say this to Suyodhana." O king! The other Pandavas did not speak any unpleasant words. The messenger reported everything to Dhritarashtra's son.

'Many foremost among men, many kings of countries and many immensely fortunate brahmanas went to the city of Dhritarashtra's son. They were honoured, in accordance with the sacred texts, in accordance with their varnas and in due order. O lord of men! They were supremely delighted. O Indra among kings! Surrounded by all the Kouravas, Dhritarashtra's son was extremely happy and spoke to Vidura. "O Kshatta![98] Act so that everyone is happy and has plenty of food. You should swiftly act so that everyone at the site of the sacrifice is satisfied." O destroyer of enemies! The learned Vidura, devoted to dharma, entertained all the varnas, as he had been instructed. He happily honoured them and gave them food, drinks, garlands, fragrances and many garments. When the brave one had observed the sacrifice in accordance with the sacred texts and in the proper order, he comforted kings and brahmanas in thousands. The Indra among kings gave away a large quantity of riches. Then, having given all the kings permission to leave, surrounded by his brothers, he entered Hastinapura, together with Karna and

Soubala.’

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Vaishampayana said, ‘O great king! When he entered, bards sang praises of the unblemished one. Others eulogized the great archer, supreme among kings. Sprinkling fried grain and sandalwood powder over him, the people said, “O king! It is through good fortune that your sacrifice has been completed without any impediments.” There were others present, who were not careful in speech. They told the king, “Your sacrifice has not been equal to Yudhishthira’s sacrifice. It does not equal a sixteenth part of that sacrifice.” Thus some, who were voluble, spoke to that lord of men. However, his well-wishers said, “Your sacrifice has surpassed all the others. Purified by performing such a sacrifice, Yayati, Nahusha, Mandhata and Bharata have all gone to heaven.” O bull among the Bharata lineage! On hearing such pleasant words from his well-wishers, that lord of men was extremely pleased and entered his city and his own house. O lord of the earth! He bowed in obeisance at the feet of his father and mother, Bhishma, Drona, Kripa and the wise Vidura. He was himself honoured by his younger brothers, brothers whom he loved.

‘Surrounded by his brothers, he sat down on an excellent seat. O great king! The son of the suta arose and spoke to him, “O foremost among Bharatas! It is through good fortune that your great sacrifice has been completed. O best of men! When you have killed the Parthas in battle and have performed a rajasuya, I will honour you again.” The immensely famous son of Dhritarashtra, great among kings, replied, “O brave one! You have spoken the truth. O best among men! When the evil-souled Pandavas have been killed and the great sacrifice of rajasuya has been performed, you will honour me again.” O descendant of the Bharata lineage! With these words, the immensely wise Kourava embraced Karna and began to think about rajasuya, the greatest of sacrifices. That supreme of kings then spoke to the Kouravas who were by his side. “O Kouravas! When will I perform the supreme and extremely expensive sacrifice of rajasuya, after having killed all the Pandavas?” Karna then told him, “O elephant among kings! Listen to my words. I will not wash my feet until Arjuna is dead.” When Karna vowed to kill Phalguna[99] in battle, Dhritarashtra’s sons, maharathas and great archers, roared in approval. Dhritarashtra’s sons thought that the Pandavas had already been conquered.

‘O Indra among kings! Duryodhana then permitted those bulls among men to leave. The lord[100] entered his beautiful house, which was like Chaitraratha.[101] O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Those other great archers also went to their own houses. Prodded by the words of the messenger, the great archers, the Pandavas, began to think about the purport of those words and could not find any happiness. O Indra among kings! The news had been brought to them by spies that the son of the suta had taken a

vow to kill Vijaya.[102] O lord of men! On learning this, Dharma's son was greatly anxious. He thought of the impenetrable armour that Karna, extraordinary in valour, possessed. He thought of all their difficulties and had no peace of mind. The great-souled one's intelligence was full of such thoughts. He decided to leave the forest of Dvaitavana, infested with many predators and animals. The king, who was Dhritarashtra's son, ruled the earth with his brothers and the brave Bhishma, Drona and Kripa. He consorted with Karna, the son of a suta, who was radiant in battle. King Duryodhana was always engaged in bringing pleasure to others. He honoured the chief brahmanas and performed sacrifices with a lot of donations. O king! That scorcher of enemies did that which brought pleasure to his brothers. The brave one had decided that the fruits of wealth were to be enjoyed and given.'

Section Forty

Mriga-Svapna-Bhaya Parva

This parva has sixteen shlokas and one chapter.

Mriga *means deer. Deer appear to Yudhishthira in a dream* (svapna) *and tell him about their fears* (bhaya), *requesting the Pandavas to relocate from Dvaitavana.*

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Janamejaya asked, 'After having freed Duryodhana, what did the immensely strong Pandavas do in that forest? You should tell me this.'

Vaishampayana said, 'One night, when Kounteya Yudhishthira was asleep in Dvaitavana, the deer showed themselves to him in a dream. Their voices were choked with tears. They trembled and stood before him, their feet joined in salutation. The Indra among kings told them, "Who are you and what do you wish for? Tell me what you desire." Having been thus addressed by the famous Kounteya Pandava, the remaining deer[1] spoke to Yudhishthira. "O descendant of the Bharata lineage! We are the remnants of the deer in Dvaitavana. O great king! Find a residence somewhere else. Otherwise, all of us will be killed. All your brothers are brave and are skilled in the use of weapons. They have reduced the lineage of those that live in the forest, until only a few remain. O immensely intelligent one! A few of us have been left, as seed for the future. O Indra among kings! O Yudhishthira! Let us extend through your favours." On seeing the trembling and frightened deer, with only a few remaining as seed, Dharmaraja Yudhishthira was extremely unhappy. The king was always engaged in the welfare of all beings. He told them, "It shall be as you say. I will do what you have asked me to." He took an oath in this fashion. When night was over, the supreme among kings was filled with compassion towards the deer and spoke to his brothers. "The deer that still remain spoke to me in a dream last night. They said, 'O fortunate one! Only a few of us remain as seed. You should show compassion towards us.' They spoke the truth. We should show compassion towards those who live in the forest. We have lived on them for one year and eight months. Therefore, let us go towards the supreme and beautiful forest of Kamyaka, which is full of large numbers of deer. It is located at the head of the desert, near the famous lake of Trinabindu. Let us pleasantly pass the rest of our time there." O king! The Pandavas, learned in dharma, swiftly left, together with the brahmanas who lived with them, and followed by Indrasena[2] and the other servants. They followed an excellent road that was full of superb grain and pure water. They soon saw the sacred hermitage of Kamyaka, populated by ascetics. O best of the

Bharata lineage! Surrounded by the bulls among the brahmanas, the Kouravyas entered it, like virtuous ones entering heaven.’

Section Forty-One

Vrihi-Drounika Parva

This parva has 117 shlokas and three chapters.

Chapter 542(245): 34 shlokas
Chapter 543(246): 36 shlokas
Chapter 544(247): 47 shlokas

Vrihi *means rice, or a grain of rice.* Drouni *or* drona *means a vessel, as well as a measure of capacity. Vyasa visits the Pandavas and tells them the story of Mudgala, who lived on a measure (drona) of rice (vrihi) and was generous enough to give it away. Mudgala was tested by the sage Durvasa and turned down an opportunity to go to heaven.*

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Vaishampayana said, 'O bull among the Bharata lineage! When the great-souled Pandavas lived in the forest, they spent eleven years in great difficulties. Although they deserved happiness, those supreme among men confronted extreme misery and lived on fruits and roots. They kept thinking about when this period would be over. The mighty-aremd rajarshi Yudhishthira thought that this supreme misery had befallen his brothers because of the sin of his own deeds. The king did not sleep happily. His heart seemed to be pierced with stakes. At that time, he witnessed the calamity that had arisen from the game with the dice. On remembering the harsh words of the suta's son, the Pandava sighed in misery, retaining the great poison of his anger. Arjuna, the twins, the famous Droupadi and the immensely energetic Bhima, supremely strong among all of them, suffered extreme sorrow when they looked at Yudhishthira. The bulls among men thought that only a short period of time remained. Their bodies were so agitated with endeavour and anger that their appearances seemed to change.

'After some time, the great yogi Vyasa, Satyavati's son, came there to see the Pandavas. When Kunti's son Yudhishthira saw him arrive, he approached and welcomed the great-souled one in accordance with the proper rites. Having satisfied Vyasa by prostrating himself, the descendant of the Pandava lineage, willing to serve and controlled in his senses, seated himself below him. On seeing that his grandson was lean from surviving on forest fare, the maharshi was driven by compassion and spoke in a voice that was choked with tears. "O mighty-armed Yudhishthira! O foremost among those who uphold dharma! Listen to my words. Those who do not torment themselves with austerities, do not find great happiness in this world. In due order, men experience happiness and unhappiness. O bull among the Bharata lineage! No one experiences continuous happiness. A man who is wise has superior insight and knows that fortune rises and sets. He does not rejoice or sorrow. When there is happiness, one enjoys it.

When there is unhappiness, one endures it, just as one who has ploughed the land waits for the right time. There is nothing superior to austerities. Austerities lead to greatness. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Know that there is nothing that austerities do not lead to. O great king! Truthfulness, honesty, restraint from anger, willingness to share, self-control, calmness, freedom from envy, non-violence, purity and control of the senses—these are the methods used by men whose deeds are pure. People who are addicted to adharma, those who are deluded and follow the ways of inferior species, achieve births that bring difficulties and never attain happiness. Whatever acts are performed here, find fruits in the next world. Therefore, one should yoke one's body to austerities and rules. O king! One should donate according to one's ability, happily and devoid of envy, to the right person at the right time, showing homage and honours. One who is honest and truthful obtains a life without difficulties. One without anger and malice obtains supreme contentment. One with self-control and serenity never confronts difficulties. One who has controlled his soul is not tormented on seeing the prosperity of others. A man who gives the right share, and the one who receives, find happiness. One who is non-violent attains supreme health. He who honours those who deserve to be honoured, obtains birth in a great lineage. He who has conquered his senses, never confronts misfortune. If one's intelligence is directed towards good deeds, following the law of time, because of this, he obtains superior intelligence."

'Yudhishthira asked, "O illustrious one! O great sage! There is the dharma of giving and there are austerities. Which of these has greater qualities in the next world and which is said to be more difficult?"

'Vyasa said, "It is said that nothing is more difficult in this world than giving. There is great thirst for wealth and wealth is obtained through difficulty. Brave men give up the love for life and enter into great battles for the sake of wealth. They enter oceans and forests. Men resort to agriculture and rearing cattle and become servants for the sake of obtaining wealth. Therefore, it is extremely difficult to give up something that has been obtained with great difficulty. Therefore, there is nothing more difficult than giving and I hold charity to be superior. It must specially be said that riches that have been obtained through just means must be given away to virtuous ones, to the right person, and at the right time and place. But if the riches have been obtained through unjust means, the deed of observing the dharma of charity does not save the giver from great danger. O Yudhishthira! It has been said that even a small gift, given to the right person at the right time, and with a pure mind, brings eternal fruits in the hereafter. On this, there is an ancient account about how Mudgala obtained great rewards by giving away a drona of rice."'

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'Yudhishthira asked, "Why did that great-souled one give up a measure of rice? O

illustrious one! Whom did he give it to and in what fashion? Please tell me. I think that a person who follows dharma has had a successful birth if he has been able to please the illustrious one[1] who has made his dharma manifest."

'Vyasa said, "O king! Mudgala used to live in Kurukshetra. He was good in his conduct and had dharma in his soul. He was rigid in his vows. He was truthful and without envy. He survived by gathering grains of rice.[2] Though he drew his sustenance like a pigeon, he served the guests and performed rites. The great ascetic observed the sacrifice known as *ishtikrita*.[3] Together with his wife and son, the sage ate for a fortnight. For the next fortnight, he lived like a pigeon, collecting one drona of vrihi. Without any distortions, he observed the new moon and full moon sacrifices. He sustained his body on the food left after gods and guests had eaten. O great king! Indra himself, the lord of the three worlds, would arrive there with the other gods on auspicious lunar days, to partake of their shares. At such auspicious times, the one who lived like a sage, happily entertained the guests with food. When that great-souled one gave rice from his measure without any envy, whatever remained always increased when another guest arrived. Because of the pure way the sage gave away rice, it increased so that hundreds of learned brahmanas enjoyed it.

'"O king! On hearing about the virtuous Mudgala, rigid in his vows, Durvasa, clad in nothing but air, went to him. O Pandava! The sage was in the form of a dishevelled lunatic. His head was shaven and he spoke harsh words. Having arrived, the supreme of sages spoke to the brahmana. 'O supreme among brahmanas! Know that I have come here desirous of food.' Mudgala told the sage that he was welcome. He offered him water to wash the feet and the mouth and devoted to his guests, gave the hungry one the supreme food he had obtained with great difficulties, though he seemed to be mad. Rigid in his vows, he was devoted. But the mad one was hungry and ate up all the tasty food that had been offered and Mudgala gave him more. When he had eaten all the food, he[4] smeared his body with the left overs and went away, the way he had come.[5] When the learned one[6] observed the next auspicious lunar day, he[7] came again and ate up all the rice that the one who lived on collections possessed. Thereupon, the sage[8] had to go without food and had to go out again to gather. But that hunger was incapable of upsetting Mudgala's temperament. There was no anger, jealousy, disrespect or agitation in the mind of that supreme of brahmanas, or in those of his sons and wife. In this way, firm in his resolution, Durvasa, supreme among sages, arrived at the right time on six occasions, to the one whose dharma was collection. But the sage could not see any distortions in his mind. He saw that the mind of that pure-hearted one was always pure and clean. Extremely delighted, the sage spoke to Mudgala. 'In this world, there is no one who is your equal, with your generosity and lack of envy. Hunger drives away all sense of dharma and removes self-possession. The tongue follows the senses and is

attracted towards the succulent. Life is sustained through food. The mind is fickle and it is difficult to control it. The control of the mind and the senses is certain asceticism. It is difficult to give up with a pure mind that which has been earned through labour and misery. O virtuous one! But all this has been exactly achieved by you. We are delighted and favoured to have met you. Control of the senses, fortitude, generosity, self-control, serenity, compassion, truthfulness and dharma are all established in you. You have conquered the worlds through your deeds. You have obtained the supreme objective. Even the residents of heaven proclaim your great deeds of giving. O one who is extremely good in his vows! You will go to heaven in your own body.' While the sage Durvasa was still speaking in this way, a messenger of the gods arrived before Mudgala in a celestial chariot that was yoked to swans and cranes and had networks of bells. It was coloured, divinely scented and could travel wherever it wished. He[9] told the brahmana rishi, 'O sage! Ascend this chariot. Through your deeds, you have obtained the supreme objective.' The rishi told the messenger of the gods, 'O messenger of the gods! I wish that you should describe to me the qualities of those who reside in heaven. What are the attributes of those who live there? What are their austerities and their resolutions? What is the divine happiness in heaven and what are its shortcomings? Learned ones, who know about family customs, say that seven steps together is all that is required for friendship with the righteous.[10] O illustrious one! On the basis of that friendship, I am now asking you. Without any hesitation, tell me the facts and what is prescribed. On hearing your words, I will act in accordance with them.'"'

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'"The messenger of the gods said, 'O maharshi! Are you still thinking about what should be done about the supreme happiness of heaven? You have obtained a great honour and you are still deliberating about it, like one who is not wise. Know that the world which exists above is known by the name of heaven. It is high up. O sage! It has excellent streets, along which the vehicles of the gods travel. O Mudgala! Men who have not tormented themselves with austerities, those who have not performed great sacrifices, those who are untruthful and those who are atheists cannot go there. Men with dharma in their souls, those who have conquered their souls, the serene, the self-controlled, those who are without jealousy, those who are devoted to the dharma of giving and brave ones who bear injury marks on their bodies, go there. Through serenity and self-control, they are the best practitioners of dharma. O brahmana! Those worlds, meant for performers of pure deeds, are served by righteous ones. O Moudgalya![11] The gods, the Sadhyas, the Vishvas,[12] the maharshis, the *yama*s,[13] the *dhama*s,[14] the gandharvas and the apsaras live there. The many separate worlds of these masses of gods are separate, and one after another, are radiant, energetic and beautiful, satisfying all desires. The

golden Mount Meru, the king of mountains, is there, extending for thirty-three thousand yojanas. O Mudgala! The celestial gardens are there. There is the sacred Nandana,[15] where the performers of pure deeds can pleasure. There is no hunger, thirst, fatigue, cold, heat or fear there, nor anything terrible or inauspicious, nor any disease. Fragrances, pleasing to the mind, are everywhere. Everything is pleasurable to the touch. O sage! There are sounds everywhere and they are pleasant to the ear and the mind. There is no sorrow or old age there, nor labour and repentance. O sage! The world that is obtained as the fruit of one's own deeds is like this. It is possible for men to go there through their own good deeds. O Moudgalya! The bodies of those who live there are resplendent because of their own deeds, and not a consequence of their mothers or fathers. There is no sweat or bad smell, no excrement and urine. O sage! Dust does not soil one's garments there. The beautiful garlands, with celestial fragrances, never fade. O brahmana! The residents travel on many celestial vehicles. They have no jealousy, sorrow or fatigue. They are devoid of confusion and envy. O great sage! They live there in heaven, in happiness.

""'O bull among sages! But beyond these worlds, and higher up, there are Shakra's worlds, with divine qualities. O brahmana! Beyond these are the sacred and effulgent worlds of Brahma. O brahmana! Rishis who have been purified through their sacred deeds go there. The gods of the gods, by the name of the Ribhus,[16] live there. These worlds are supreme and are worshipped even by the gods. These worlds are radiant in their own lustre and they yield every object of desire. These lords of the worlds[17] are not tormented on account of women and are free from envy. They do not offer oblations, nor do they feed on amrita. They possess divine bodies and do not have physical forms. These eternal gods of the gods do not crave for happiness. They are not transformed when the eras[18] change. How can they have old age, death, joy, pleasure or happiness? O sage! How can they have unhappiness, happiness, affection or hatred? O Moudgalya! That supreme state is craved even by the celestials. But that supreme salvation is difficult to obtain and cannot be got by those who are still subject to desire. There are thirty-three worlds.[19] The worlds of the learned are beyond these. Those who follow the best of restraints, or donate according to the norms, attain these. You have attained that because of your generous deeds. Enjoy the happiness that you have earned through your good deeds, illuminated by the radiance of your austerities. O brahmana! Such is the bliss of heaven, in many different worlds. I have described the qualities of heaven to you. Now hear about the taints. In heaven, while enjoying the fruits of deeds performed, one must enjoy them right up to the roots, and cannot perform any other deeds. In my view, this is a blemish, because there is a fall at the end of it and those who minds have been full of bliss, must fall. O Mudgala! After having witnessed that brilliance and prosperity, the discontentment and regret that follow the relocation to a

different region, must be extremely difficult to endure. For those who fall, the consciousness is confounded. The passions cause agitation. The garlands fade and fear descends on those who are falling. O Moudgalya! These are the terrible taints that exist all the way up to Brahma's abode. But this is not true of the higher worlds of the performers of good deeds. For such men, the qualities are innumerable.[20] O sage! There is another supreme characteristic of those who have been dislodged from heaven. After their good deeds are over, they are born among men. They are born as immensely fortunate and enjoy their share of prosperity. But if one does not attain wisdom there, one obtains an inferior status.[21] The deeds performed in this world are enjoyed in the next. O brahmana! It has been said that this is a world of deeds. The next is one of fruits. O Mudgala! I have explained everything that you have asked me. Through your grace, without any delay, let us go to the region of the righteous.'"

'Vyasa said, "When Moudgalya heard these words, he reflected on them in his mind. Having thought about them, the best of sages replied to the messenger of the gods. 'O messenger of the gods! I bow down before you. O father![22] Please go, according to your wishes. If there are such great taints, I have nothing to do with heaven or happiness. There will be great unhappiness at the time of the fall, by those who have enjoyed heaven. There will be extremely terrible regret. Therefore, I do not desire heaven. I will only look for the infinite region where there is no sorrow, unhappiness or dislodging, once one has traversed the path and has reached there.' Having spoken these words, the sage gave the messenger of the gods permission to leave. He returned to a life of collecting rice and achieved supreme serenity. He looked on praise and blame equally. A brick, a stone and a piece of gold were the same to him. Through the yoga of knowledge, he was always engaged in meditation. Having obtained strength through the yoga of meditation, he obtained supreme wisdom. He attained the eternal and supreme success, the marks of supreme salvation.[23] O Kounteya! Therefore, you should not sorrow. You have been dislodged from a prosperous kingdom. But you will regain it through your austerities. Happiness follows unhappiness and unhappiness follows happiness in circles around a man, like the rim of a wheel. You have infinite valour and you will obtain the kingdom of your fathers and grandfathers, once the thirteen years have passed. You should discard the fever in your mind."'

Vaishampayana said, 'Having spoken these words to the descendant of the Pandava lineage, the illustrious and wise Vyasa returned to his hermitage, for the performance of austerities.'

Section Forty-Two

Droupadi Harana Parva

This parva has 1247 shlokas and thirty-six chapters.

Chapter 545(248): 17 shlokas
Chapter 546(249): 13 shlokas
Chapter 547(250): 9 shlokas
Chapter 548(251): 21 shlokas
Chapter 549(252): 27 shlokas
Chapter 550(253): 26 shlokas
Chapter 551(254): 21 shlokas
Chapter 552(255): 59 shlokas
Chapter 553(256): 30 shlokas
Chapter 554(257): 10 shlokas
Chapter 555(258): 16 shlokas
Chapter 556(259): 40 shlokas
Chapter 557(260): 15 shlokas
Chapter 558(261): 55 shlokas
Chapter 559(262): 41 shlokas
Chapter 560(263): 43 shlokas
Chapter 561(264): 73 shlokas
Chapter 562(265): 30 shlokas
Chapter 563(266): 68 shlokas
Chapter 564(267): 54 shlokas
Chapter 565(268): 40 shlokas
Chapter 566(269): 14 shlokas
Chapter 567(270): 29 shlokas
Chapter 568(271): 27 shlokas
Chapter 569(272): 26 shlokas
Chapter 570(273): 33 shlokas
Chapter 571(274): 31 shlokas
Chapter 572(275): 69 shlokas
Chapter 573(276): 13 shlokas
Chapter 574(277): 41 shlokas
Chapter 575(278): 32 shlokas
Chapter 576(279): 23 shlokas
Chapter 577(280): 33 shlokas
Chapter 578(281): 108 shlokas
Chapter 579(282): 44 shlokas
Chapter 580(283): 16 shlokas

Harana *means abduction and this parva is about Droupadi's abduction by Jayadratha. Jayadratha abducts Droupadi. The Pandavas defeat Jayadratha and free Droupadi, shaving Jayadratha's head in the process. Jayadratha obtains a boon from Shiva. This section then tells the story of the Ramayana and Savitri and Satyavan, where Savitri brings her husband, Satyavan, back from the land of the dead.*

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Vaishampayana said, 'Those maharathas, the best of the Bharata lineage, sported like immortals in the forest of Kamyaka, full of large numbers of deer. They gazed upon many forest regions in all directions and woods full of blossoms, beautiful according to the season. The Pandavas, the destroyers of enemies, equals of Indra and fond of hunting deer, roamed for some time in that great forest. One day, at the same time, all of them went out in the four directions, since those tigers among men, the scorchers of enemies, wished to obtain deer for serving the brahmanas. With the permission of maharshi Trinabindu, blazing in austerities, and Dhoumya, they left Droupadi in the hermitage. At that time, the famous king of the Sindhus, the son of Vriddhakshatra, was headed for the country of Shalva, desiring to get married.[1] He was surrounded by a large retinue, as was appropriate for a king. With the many kings who were with him, he stopped in Kamyaka. In that deserted forest, he saw the famous Droupadi, the beloved wife of the Pandavas, standing at the gate of the hermitage. Her form was radiant in its supreme beauty. It illuminated the forest region, like lightning on a dark cloud. "Is she an apsara, a daughter of the gods, or an illusion created by the gods?" Thinking this, all of them joined their hands in salutation and gazed at the unblemished one.

'The king of the Sindhus, Jayadratha, the son of Vriddhakshatra, was amazed and happy in his mind to see her unblemished limbs. He was deluded by desire and told King Kotikashya, "Who is this one with the unblemished limbs? Is she human? I do not desire to marry, since I have seen this extremely beautiful lady. I will take her with me and return to my own abode. O gentle one! Go and find out who she is. Whom does she belong to and where has she come from? Why has the one with the beautiful eyebrows come to a forest that is full of thorns? She has beautiful hips. She is the beauty of this world. She is slender of waist and her teeth are beautiful. Her eyes are large. Will she love me now? I will consider my desires to be satisfied if I can obtain this supreme of women. O Kotika! Go and find out who her protector is." On hearing these words, Kotikashya, who was adorned with earrings, descended from his chariot and approached her, the way a jackal approaches the wife of a tiger, and asked her.'

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'Kotikashya said, "O beautiful one! Who are you, standing alone in this hermitage and holding onto the lowered branch of a kadamba tree? O one with the beautiful brows! You are as radiant as the flames of a fire in the night, fanned by the wind. You are endowed with supreme beauty. Are you not scared of this forest? Are you a goddess, a yakshi or a danavi? Are you a beautiful apsara or a beautiful lady from the daitya lineage? Is your beautiful form that of a serpent princess? Are you a demoness who walks the forests at night? Are you the wife of King Varuna, or Yama, or Soma, or the lord of riches? Have you come from the abodes of Dhata, Vidhata, Savita, Vibhu or

Shakra?[2] You have not asked us who we are, nor do we know who your protector is. O fortunate one! Increasing your respect, we are asking you who your powerful lord is. Tell us the names of your relatives, husband and lineage, and also the details of what you are doing here. I am the son of King Suratha and men know me as Kotikashya. The one who is seated on that golden chariot, like oblations being poured into the fire in an altar, is the king of Trigarta. His eyes are as long as a lotus and that brave one has the name of Kshemankara. The foremost son of the king of Kuninda is behind him, holding a giant bow in his hand. He is wide in the shoulders and is gazing at you in wonder. He always dwells in the mountains. A dark and handsome youth is standing near the pond. He is the son of Subala, king of the Ikshvakus. O one with the beautiful body! He is one who slays his enemies. There is one who is followed by twelve princes from Souvira, waving flags.[3] All their chariots are yoked to red horses, like blazing fires at sites of sacrifices. Their names are Angaraka, Kunjara, Guptaka, Shatrunjaya, Sanjaya, Supravriddha, Prabhankara, Bhramara, Ravi, Shura, Pratapa and Kuhara. He[4] is followed by six thousand on chariots and elephants, horses and infantry. O fortunate one! If you have heard of the name of Jayadratha, the king of Souvira, that one is he. After him, there are his undaunted brothers, Balahaka, Anika and Vidarana, and all the other brave and young ones from Souvira. But they are all inferior to the king in strength. The king is travelling with these companions, like Indra protected by the Maruts. O one with the beautiful hair! Now tell us what we do not know. Whose wife are you? Whose daughter are you?"'

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Vaishampayana said, 'Then princess Droupadi replied to the question that the foremost of the Shibis[5] had asked. She glanced gently and let go off the branch. She gathered her silken upper garment and replied, "O son of a king! I know in my heart that it is not proper for someone like me to address you thus. But there is no other man or woman here who can reply to your question. O fortunate one! I am alone here and must therefore, give my own reply. Listen. I am alone in this forest. Being always devoted to my own dharma, how can I speak to you then? I know that you are the son of Suratha and that men know you by the name of Kotikashya. O Shaibya! Therefore, I will tell you about my relatives.[6] Listen. O Shaibya! I am the daughter of King Drupada and men know me as Krishna. I have chosen five men to be my husbands. You may have heard of them, since they come from Khandavaprastha. They are Yudhishthira, Bhima, Arjuna and the two brave sons of Madri. The Parthas have left me here and have left in the four directions to hunt. The king[7] has gone east, Bhimasena south, Jaya[8] west and the twins to the north. I think that the time has come for those great charioteers to return. Depart after they have honoured you. Descend and unyoke your steeds. The great-souled son of

Dharma loves guests and will be delighted to see you here." Having thus spoken to Shaibya's son, Drupada's moon-faced daughter thought of the dharma of attending to guests and entered the extensive cottage, made out of leaves.'

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Vaishampayana said, 'O descendant of the Bharata lineage! When all the kings were seated, the king of Souvira heard Kotikashya's words and replied to Shaibya. "On hearing her words, my mind is besotted by her. She is supreme among women. Why have you returned from there? O mighty-armed one! I tell you truthfully. Now that I have seen this lady, all other women seem like monkeys to me. She has stolen my heart, from the moment that I have seen her. O Shaibya! Tell me if that fortunate one is human." Kotikashya said, "She is the famous princess Droupadi Krishna. She is the revered queen of the five sons of Pandu. That respected one is the beloved of all the Parthas. O Souvira! Now that you have met her, let us happily proceed towards Souvira." But Jayadratha, the lord of Souvira and Sindhu, was evil in his inclinations. He replied, "Let us go and see Droupadi." He entered the empty hermitage, like a wolf entering a den of lions.

'He himself was the seventh[9] and spoke these words to Krishna. "O one with the beautiful thighs! Are you well? Are your husbands in good health? Are those whose welfare you desire in good health?" Droupadi replied, "Kouravya King Yudhishthira, Kunti's son, is well. So am I, his brothers, and the others you have asked about. O son of a king! Accept this seat and water to wash your feet. Let me give you fifty deer for your breakfast. Kunti's son, Yudhishthira, will himself give you black antelopes, spotted antelopes, deer, fawn, *sharabhas*,[10] rabbits, white-footed antelopes, ruru, *shambara*,[11] oxen, many deer, boar, buffaloes and many others of the deer species." Jayadratha said, "You have already done everything to ensure a good breakfast for me. Come. Ascend my chariot and discover complete happiness. The Parthas are wretched and live in the forest. They have lost their fortune and have been dislodged from their kingdom. They have lost their intelligence. You should not serve them. It is not wise to be devoted to husbands who have lost their fortune. One should be united with a husband when he is united with prosperity, but no longer reside with him when the fortune is destroyed. The sons of Pandu are without fortune. Their kingdom has been destroyed for an eternal period. Out of affection towards them, you should not suffer that misery. O one with the beautiful hips! Be my wife. Abandon them and obtain happiness. With me, share the kingdoms of Sindhu and Souvira." At these words of the king of Sindhu, which made the heart tremble, Krishna left the spot, a deep frown on her face. The slender-waisted Krishna ignored his words in contempt and told the one from Sindhu, "Do not speak in this way again. Are you not ashamed?" Expecting her husbands to return soon, the unblemished one began to distract him with words, mingled with more words.'

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Vaishampayana said, 'Her beautiful face was crimson with anger. Her eyes were red with anger. Her knitted brows were raised. With her face suffused, Drupada's daughter again spoke to the king of Souvira. "You have insulted famous maharathas whose poison is virulent. O foolish one! Do you have no shame? Each of them is like the great Indra and is devoted to his own task. They have not wavered in battle against yakshas and rakshasas. O Suvira! Never speak ill of an ascetic, who is full of knowledge and deserves to be praised, whether he roams in the forest or lives the life of a householder. Only dogs speak like that. You will descend into the mouth of hell that has now opened. I do not think that there is anyone in this great assembly of kshatriyas who can hold you by the hand and prevent this. You hope to defeat and kill Dharmaraja. The rutting elephant is like the peak of a mountain and roams around in the valleys of the Himalayas. You are like a man who wishes to chase it from its herd, armed only with a stick. You are childish. The immensely strong lion was asleep. You have woken it, trying to pluck eyelashes from its face. You will have to run away, when you see the wrathful Bhimasena. The immensely strong, terrible and fully grown lion was asleep in its mountainous cavern. Like a man who has kicked it, you wish to counter the angry and terrible Jishnu.[12] You are like a mad man, who has stamped with his feet on the backs of two dark, fork-tongued serpents, virulent in their poison. You are seeking to battle with two brave men, the youngest of the Pandavas. The bamboo, the reed and the plantain bear fruit. But then they die and do not grow in size. A crab conceives only so as to perish. Like that, you wish to grasp me, although I am protected by them."

'Jayadratha said, "O Krishna! I know all this and I know what those sons of kings are like. But you will not be able to frighten me with those threats now. O Krishna! We have all been born in the seventeen noble lineages.[13] We possess the six qualities.[14] O Droupadi! We think that the sons of Pandu are devoid of these. Therefore, swiftly ascend this elephant or this chariot. You cannot dissuade us with words alone. Hope, by lamenting piteously, that you are able to obtain the favours of the king of Souvira."

'Droupadi replied, "Though I am extremely powerful, the king of Souvira now takes me to be weak. He thinks that I am not sure of myself and therefore, I will plead and demean myself before the king of Souvira. Both Krishnas[15] will follow my footsteps, riding together on a single chariot. Indra himself cannot abduct me, not to speak of a weak and wretched human. Kiriti,[16] the slayer of enemy heroes, terrifies the hearts of enemies on his chariot. When he enters your army for my sake, he will consume it like the summer's dry wood. Janardana,[17] followed by Vrishni warriors, all the mighty archers from the Kekaya lineage, and all the other princes, will happily follow my footsteps. The arrows released from Gandiva by Dhananjaya's arms are extremely swift and make a thunderous noise. They will make a terrible roar. The large showers of

arrows released from Gandiva are extremely swift and are like locusts. There will be the roar of conch shells and the roar of leather gloves. The wielder of the Gandiva will release them repeatedly. When those arrows pierce your chest, what thoughts will pass through your mind? You will see Bhima advance, with a mace in his hand. Madri's two sons will stride in every direction, vomiting the poison of their anger. O wretched one! You will repent this for a very long time. In my thoughts, I have never been false to my husbands, extremely deserving of respect. Because of that truth, I will see you bound and dragged by the sons of Pritha. I may be violently seized by you. But you are incapable of frightening me. I will encounter those braves of the Kuru lineage and return again to Kamyaka forest."'

Vaishampayana said, 'Her eyes were dilated. She saw that they were about to seize her and remonstrated with them again. She cried out in fear, "Do not touch me." She also sought help with the priest, Dhoumya. Jayadratha grasped her by her upper garment, but she forcibly pushed him away. Pushed by her, that evil one fell, like a tree that has been uprooted. However, she was seized again with great force and the princess began to sigh repeatedly. Krishna showed obeisance at Dhoumya's feet and then Krishna was made to ascend the chariot. Dhoumya said, "Without vanquishing the maharathas, you cannot take her away. O Jayadratha! You should remember the ancient dharma of the kshatriyas. There is no doubt that you will reap the fruits of this mean and evil act. You will encounter the brave Pandavas, with Dharmaraja at the forefront." The famous princess was being carried away. Having said this, Dhoumya followed, by entering the ranks of the infantry.'

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Vaishampayana said, 'Having roamed in all the directions separately and having killed deer, boars and buffaloes, the Parthas, foremost among archers on earth, assembled together. The great forest teemed with deer and predators and was full of birds. On hearing the resounding cries of the deer, Yudhishthira spoke to his brothers. "The birds and animals are headed in the direction that has been lit up by the sun. They are making harsh noises and seem to be in great excitement, as if this mighty forest has been invaded by enemies. Let us hasten, forgetting the deer. My mind is burning with a raging fire. My intelligence is clouded. The breath of life in my body is tormented. Kamyaka now appears to me like a pond that has been robbed of its serpents by Suparna,[18] a kingdom that is without its king and its fortune, or a pot that has been emptied of its liquor by drunkards." The brave ones then headed for the hermitage on excellent chariots, yoked to Saindhava[19] steeds that had the speed of the wind or a storm. While they returned, they beheld a jackal howling hideously on the left hand side. On noticing it, the king[20] spoke to Bhima and Dhananjaya. "This jackal has appeared on our left hand side and the inferior animal is speaking. This clearly shows that the evil

Kurus must have mounted a fierce attack on us." They had gone out for a hunt in the great forest. They now entered the grove[21] and saw the maid who used to serve their beloved wife. She was weeping.

'O Indra among kings! Indrasena swiftly descended from the chariot and rushing to the maid, who was stricken with grief, spoke these words. "Why are you lamenting and why have you fallen down on the ground? I hope evil ones have not caused violence to the princess Droupadi. Her form is without blemish and her eyes are extremely large. Her form is equal to the bulls among the Kurus. Even if the goddess has entered into the earth, ascended to heaven or plunged into the sea, the Parthas will follow her steps there, because Dharmaraja is gravely tormented. They are the destroyers of their enemies and bear their difficulties, unvanquished. This supreme jewel is as dear to them as their own lives. Who is the foolish one who will dare to carry her away? Does he not know that she has protectors now? She is like the walking heart of the Pandavas. Whose body will now be horribly pierced by sharp and terrible arrows that will then enter the earth? O timid one! Do not sorrow over her. Know that Krishna will return today. Having killed all their enemies, the Parthas will be united with Yajnaseni." Wiping her beautiful face, the maid then spoke to the charioteer Indrasena. "Ignoring the ones who are like five Indras, Jayadratha violated this place and abducted Krishna. The traces remain and are still fresh. The broken branches have not yet faded. Swiftly turn[22] and pursue. The princess cannot have gone far. All of you are the equals of Indra. Prepare yourselves with large, expensive and handsome armour. Grasp your great bows and arrows and swiftly travel along her steps. Else, she may be confounded through scolding and sticks. Her face will dry and her mind will be bewildered. She may give up her body to an unworthy person, like sacred oblations thrown into ashes.[23] Else, she may become an oblation to the fire, like a chaff of grain. Else, a wreath may be flung onto a burning ground. While the officiating brahmana is inattentive, the offering of soma on the altar may be licked by a dog. When you went for a hunt in the great forest, the jackal has destroyed the lotus.[24] Your loved one's face has a fine nose and beautiful eyes. Her brilliant and pure face is as beautiful as the moonlight. Let it not be touched by an evil one, like a dog that eats up a sacrificial cake. Follow her swiftly. Hasten, lest time passes you by."

'Yudhishthira said, "O fortunate one! Be quiet and control your words. You should not speak harsh words while we are here. Whether kings or princes, if they are deluded because of the insolence of their strength, they are certain to be deceived."'

Vaishampayana said, 'Saying this, they departed swiftly. They followed the remaining trails of the others. Like predatory beasts, they sighed repeatedly. They twanged their mighty bows. Then they saw the dust raised by the soldiers, thrown up from the hooves of the horses. Dhoumya was in the midst of the infantry and he addressed Bhima, asking

him to attack. The princes comforted Dhoumya, who was extremely miserable in his mind, and asked him to return happily. Then they swooped down on that army, like hawks on raw meat. They were like the great Indra in their valour. They were angered at Yajnaseni's molestation. On seeing their beloved stationed on Jayadratha's chariot, their rage flared up. Vrikodara, Dhananjaya, the twins and the king, all mighty archers, called out to the king of Sindhu to stop. At this, the enemies lost all sense of direction.'

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Vaishampayana said, 'On seeing Bhimasena and Arjuna, the intolerant kshatriyas raised a terrible roar in that forest. On seeing the foremost pennants of those bulls among the Kurus, the evil-souled King Jayadratha was robbed of his energy. He spoke to Yajnaseni, resplendent on his chariot. "O Krishna! Five great chariots are advancing. I think they must be your husbands. You know them. O beautiful one! Point out to me the separate Pandavas, riding on their separate chariots."

'Droupadi replied, "O foolish one! How will it help you to know those great archers, now that you have performed your terrible and evil deed? My brave husbands have arrived here and you will have no remnants left in this war. However, you are about to die and everything should be told to such a person. It is the dharma that I should answer your question. On having seen Dharmaraja and his younger brothers, I suffer no pain or fear on account of you. Two beautiful drums[25] sweetly sound at the top of his pennant. They are named Nanda and Upananda. He knows how to decide about the true nature of dharma and those who are successful, always follow him. His complexion is like that of pure gold. His nose is high. He is lean and his eyes are large. He is known as the foremost among the Kurus, Yudhishthira, the son of Dharma, and my husband. He provides refuge even to an enemy. He is brave among men and is a follower of dharma, ready to give up his life for it. O foolish one! For your own welfare, run to him quickly. Discard your weapons and join your hands in salutation. You will see a mighty-armed one seated on his chariot, like a fully grown shala tree. He is biting his lips and his brows are furrowed. His name is Vrikodara and he is my husband. He is immensely strong and brave and is drawn by well-controlled and strong horses. The deeds that he has done are superhuman. He is known on earth by the name of Bhima. Nothing is left of those who commit crimes against him. He never forgets an enemy. He thinks of every possible way to avenge the enmity and even after that, he is not pacified. He is gentle, generous, forbearing and famous. He is brave among men. He is in control of his senses and serves his elders. He is Yudhishthira's brother and disciple. His name is Dhananjaya and he is my husband. Desire, fear or avarice will never cause him to abandon dharma. He never performs a cruel act. His energy is equal to that of the fire-god. He is Kunti's son and he withstands and represses all his enemies. He is knowledgeable about everything concerning dharma and artha. The learned one removes the fear from those

who are frightened. It is said that his form is the most beautiful on earth. All the Pandavas protect him. He is devoted to his vows and he is dearer to me than my life. This brave one is Nakula, my husband. The second one is light of hand and fights with the sword. He is mighty and intelligent and he is Sahadeva. O foolish one! You will witness his deeds in battle today, like Shatakratu against the army of the daityas. He is brave and skilled in the use of weapons. He is wise and learned. He performs acts that bring pleasure to the king, the son of Dharma. He is like the moon and the sun in his energy. He is the youngest of the Pandavas and is loved by them. There is no other man who is his equal in intelligence. He is eloquent in an assembly of the wise. He is brave and always intolerant. He is wise and learned. He is Sahadeva, my husband. He is ready to give up his life or enter the fire, rather than act against dharma. He is always wise and devoted to the dharma of kshatriyas. He is brave among men and is dearer to Kunti than her life. Like a boat filled with gems on the edge of the ocean, riding on the back of a shark[26] and destroyed, you will see the soldiers in your army destroyed and freed[27] by the sons of Pandu. I have thus described to you the sons of Pandu, whom you have foolishly shown disrespect for. If you escape from them with an uninjured body, you will have been reborn, though you are still alive."'

Vaishampayana said, 'Then the five Parthas, equal to five Indras, ignored the terrified infantry, standing with hands joined in salutation. They angrily attacked the army of chariots from all sides, with dark showers of arrows.'

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Vaishampayana said, 'While this was going on, the king of Saindhava told the kings, "Stand firm. Attack. Surround them." When the soldiers saw Bhima, Arjuna and the twins with Yudhishthira, the terrible sound of battle arose. On seeing those tigers among men, intoxicated with their strength, like tigers, those from Shibi, Sindhu and Trigarta were despondent. Bhima grasped a mace that was constructed entirely out of iron and was decorated with gold. He rushed towards Saindhava, who had been driven by destiny. Then Kotikashya placed himself in between. He surrounded and attacked Vrikodara with a large number of chariots. Though the arms of the warriors hurled many spears, javelins and iron arrows at him, Bhima did not tremble at all. With his mace, Bhima slew an elephant, the rider and fourteen foot soldiers who were in the vanguard of Saindhava's army. Wishing to seize Souvira, in the vanguard, Partha[28] slew five hundred maharathas, who hailed from the mountains. In an instant, in that battle, the king[29] himself killed one hundred brave and chief Souvira warriors who had attacked him. Nakula was seen to descend from his chariot, with a sword in his hand. Like scattered seeds, he severed the heads of those who were guarding at the rear. Like peacocks falling from a tree, Sahadeva fought warriors on elephants from his chariot and struck them down with his iron arrows. Then Trigarta descended from his great

chariot with a bow. He was skilled with the club and slew the four horses of the king.[30] On seeing the foot soldier who was near, King Dharmaraja, Kunti's son, pierced him in the chest with an arrow that was in the shape of a half-moon. Struck in the chest, the brave one began to vomit blood and fell down before Partha,[31] like a tree that had been uprooted. Since his horses had been slain, Dharmaraja, together with Indrasena, descended from his chariot and climbed onto Sahadeva's giant chariot. Picking out Nakula, Kshemankara and Mahamukha attacked him from both sides with showers of sharp arrows. While they showered arrows on him like monsoon clouds, Madri's son slew them with one large arrow[32] each. Suratha, the king of Trigarta, was skilled in fighting with elephants. He stood on the pole of his chariot and had Nakula's chariot destroyed by an elephant. But Nakula wasn't frightened and descended from his chariot. He held a sword and a shield in his hand. He whirled them and stood his ground, as immobile as a mountain. Suratha desired to kill Nakula and dispatched his supreme elephant, which angrily attacked with its trunk raised. But Nakula approached the elephant and sliced off the elephant's trunk and tusks, from the roots, with his sword. The elephant was adorned with anklets. It lowered its head, and with a giant roar, fell down on the ground, crushing the riders through this fall. Having accomplished this great deed, Madri's brave and maharatha son ascended Bhimasena's chariot to find some rest. On seeing King Kotikashya rush towards the battle, Bhima sliced off his charioteer's head, who was goading the horses, with an arrow that had the head of a razor. The king did not realize that his charioteer had been slain by the mighty-armed one. With the charioteer killed, the horses ran hither and thither on the field of battle. He[33] was without a charioteer and wished to flee. But Bhima Pandava, supreme among warriors, killed him with a javelin he hurled with his hand. Using sharp and iron arrows, Dhananjaya cut off the heads and bows of twelve from Souvira. With his arrows, the atiratha[34] slew in battle Shibis, the foremost among Ikshvakus, Trigartas and Saindhavas, as soon as they came within range. Many elephants with flags and many warriors with pennants were seen to have been killed by maharatha Savyasachi. Headless torsos and torso-less heads were strewn all over the entire earth. Dogs, vultures, herons, crows, ravens, kites, jackals and birds feasted on the flesh and blood of warriors who had been slain.

'On seeing that the brave ones had been killed, Jayadratha, the king of Sindhu, was terrified. He freed Krishna and got ready to run away. His soldiers were in disarray and he lowered Droupadi.[35] Then that worst of men ran towards the forest to save his life. On seeing Droupadi, with Dhoumya at the forefront, Dharmaraja asked Madri's brave son to pick her up on his chariot.[36] After Jayadratha had run away, Vrikodara slew the remaining soldiers with iron arrows. On seeing that Jayadratha was running away, Savyasachi restrained Bhima from killing off Saindhava's soldiers. Arjuna said, "I do not

see Jayadratha on the field of battle. It is because of that evil one that we confronted this calamity. O fortunate one! Let us search for him. Why are you killing these soldiers? This is a pointless task. What do you think?" Having been thus addressed by the wise Gudakesha,[37] Bhimasena looked at Yudhishthira and eloquently spoke these words. "The foremost warriors of the enemy have been killed. Others have fled in different directions. O king! Take Droupadi with you and return from here. O Indra among kings! Take Droupadi to the hermitage with the twins and great-souled Dhoumya and comfort her. I will not allow the stupid king of Saindhava to escape alive, even if he escapes to the nether regions or has Shakra as a charioteer." Yudhishthira replied, "O mighty-armed one! Though he is evil in his soul, Saindhava does not deserve to be killed. We must think of Duhshala and the illustrious Gandhari." On hearing these words, Droupadi was agitated. Though bashful, she angrily spoke to Bhima. The wise one addressed her husbands, Bhima and Arjuna. "If you wish to do something that brings me pleasure, kill that wretch of a man. Saindhava is wicked, evil in his intelligence and brings ill fame to his lineage. An enemy who carries away one's wife, though there is no cause for enmity, or steals the kingdom, should not be allowed to live, even if he craves pardon in battle." Having been thus addressed, the two tigers among men went to search for Saindhava. The king returned with Krishna, together with the priest.

'When he entered the hermitage, he saw that the seats and the pots were strewn around. Markandeya and the other brahmanas had been dispersed. The assembled brahmanas had been lamenting over Droupadi and the immensely wise one met them, together with his wife and brothers. On seeing that the king had returned and Droupadi had been brought back again, after the defeat of Sindhu and Souvira, they were delighted. Surrounded by them, the king seated himself there. The radiant Krishna entered the hermitage with the twins.

'On learning that the enemy had travelled only one krosha, Bhima and Arjuna spurred their horses and swiftly rushed after him. Manly Arjuna performed an extraordinary act. He killed Saindhava's horses from a distance that was one krosha away. He possessed divine weapons and he wasn't disturbed in times of difficulty. He performed this difficult task with arrows that had mantras invoked over them. Then the brave Bhima and Dhananjaya rushed at the terrified and solitary Saindhava, who had lost his horses and was disturbed in his senses. Saindhava saw that his horses had been killed and was extremely miserable. Dhananjaya had performed an extremely valorous task. He[38] made up his mind to run away towards the forest. But seeing that he was running away, mighty-armed Phalguna followed him and spoke these words. "With such valour, how did you think of abducting a woman by force? O prince! Turn around. Flight does not become you. Leaving your followers in the midst of an enemy, how can you run away?" But though addressed by Partha,[39] Saindhava did not turn around. The strong Bhima suddenly rushed at him, exclaiming, "Stay! Stay!" "Don't kill him," responded the

compassionate Partha.'

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Vaishampayana said, 'On seeing the two brothers raise their weapons, Jayadratha was extremely miserable. He wished to live and fled swiftly. But the powerful Bhimasena descended from his chariot and chased the one who was running away. He angrily grasped him by the hair on his head. Raising him up, he angrily crushed him down on the ground. Then grasping the king by the neck, he thrashed him. When he had regained his senses, he expressed a desire to rise up. But the mighty-armed one kicked him in the head with his feet. Bhima struck him with his thighs and his fists. Oppressed by these blows, the king lost consciousness. But Phalguna restrained the angry Bhimasena, saying, "O Kourava! For Duhshala's sake, remember what the king[40] has said." Bhimasena replied, "This wicked and stupid one does not deserve to be alive. This worst of men has oppressed Krishna, who did not deserve it. How can I possibly do what the compassionate king has said? Out of your childish intelligence, you are also always trying to restrain me." Having said this, with an arrow that had a head shaped like a half-moon, Vrikodara shaved off his head until there were five tufts of hair left,[41] though he[42] said nothing. Vrikodara then told the king, "O stupid one! If you wish to remain alive, listen to what I am telling you. In public gatherings and assemblies, you must say that you are our slave. I will then grant you your life. This is known to be the custom of the victorious." King Jayadratha was scared for his life and agreed. He told Bhima, tiger among men and one who makes the field of battle beautiful, that it would be this way.

'Partha Vrikodara then bound him so that he could not move and placed the unconscious one, dirty with dust, on his chariot. Following Partha's[43] request, he placed him on the chariot and went to the centre of the hermitage, where Yudhishthira was seated. Bhima displayed Jayadratha, who was in that state. On seeing him in that state, the king[44] laughed and said, "Set him free." Bhima told the king, "Tell Droupadi that this evil-minded one has become a slave of the sons of Pandu." Then the eldest brother affectionately replied, "If you have any respect for me, act so as to set him free." Glancing at Yudhishthira, Droupadi also told Bhima, "Set the king's slave free, the one you have shaved with five tufts left." The king was freed and he showed his respects to Yudhishthira. In bewilderment, the king[45] honoured all the sages who were there. On seeing Jayadratha held up by Savyasachi, the compassionate King Yudhishthira, Dharma's son, said, "You are free. Go as a free man. But do not act in this way again. Shame on you. You lusted after a woman. You are mean and your companions are mean. Who but the worst of men can act in this fashion?" Though he was the performer of an evil act, on seeing him bereft of his senses, the king who was the foremost of the

Bharatas, was moved by compassion. “May dharma increase in your intelligence. May your mind never turn towards adharma again. O Jayadratha! Go in peace, with your horses, your chariots and your infantry.” Being thus addressed, he was ashamed. He lowered his face a little and was silent.

‘O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Stricken with grief, the king went to Gangadvara and sought refuge with the god Virupaksha,[46] Uma’s consort. He performed great austerities and pleased Vrishadhvaja. Pleased with him, the three-eyed one accepted his sacrifices in person. The god granted him a boon and he accepted it. Listen to it. “May I be able to vanquish the five Pandavas, on their chariots, in battle.” Thus spoke the king to the god and the god replied, “No. They are invincible in battle and cannot be killed in battle. But you will be able to restrain them, except for the mighty-armed Arjuna, whom even the gods find impossible to assail. He is foremost among those who are skilled in the use of weapons. He is protected by Krishna, known as the one who cannot be vanquished, and who holds the conch shell, the chakra and the mace.” Having been told this, the king went to his own abode. The Pandavas continued to live in Kamyaka forest.’

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Janamejaya asked, ‘After they had suffered incomparable miseries because Krishna had been abducted, what did the Pandavas, tigers among men, do?’

Vaishampayana said, ‘Having freed Krishna and vanquished Jayadratha, Dharmaraja Yudhishthira sat down with the masses of sages. In the midst of those maharshis, who listened and lamented, the descendant of the Pandu lineage spoke these words to Markandeya. “O illustrious one! I think that time, and destiny created by the gods, is inevitable for all beings and cannot be transgressed. Our wife is learned about dharma and conducts herself according to dharma. How can she have been touched in this way, like a false allegation of theft against a pure one? She has never committed an evil deed. She has never committed an act that can be censured. Droupadi has always practised the greatest form of dharma among brahmanas. The foolish King Jayadratha abducted her by force. Because of that abduction of her, he had the hair on his head shaved off. He was defeated in battle, with all his companions. It is true that we have got her back after killing the Saindhava forces. But the act of abduction, while we were distracted, has sullied us. This life in the forest is full of misery. We sustain ourselves through hunting. This means that those who live in the forest cause violence to those of the deer family. This exile has been brought about by relatives who resorted to falsehood. Is there any other man who is more unfortunate than I? Have you seen, or heard of, any such one earlier?”’

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‘Markandeya said, “O bull among the Bharata lineage! Rama confronted incomparable misery. His wife, Janaki,[47] was forcibly abducted by a rakshasa. Having swiftly killed the vulture Jatayu by resorting to maya, Ravana, Indra of the rakshasas, abducted her from the hermitage, travelling through the sky. Resorting to the strength of Sugriva, Rama bound a bridge over the ocean, burnt Lanka with his sharp arrows, and obtained her back.”

‘Yudhishthira asked, “In what lineage was Rama born? What was his valour? How gallant was he? Whose son was Ravana and what was his enmity with him? O illustrious one! Please tell me all this in detail. I wish to hear Rama’s account, the one whose deeds were unsullied.”

‘Markandeya said, “In the lineage of Ikshvaku, there was a great king by the name of Aja. His son was Dasharatha, pure and always devoted to learning. He had four sons who were learned in dharma and artha—Rama, Lakshmana, Shatrughna and the immensely strong Bharata. Rama’s mother was Koushalya and Bharata’s was Kaikeyi. Lakshmana and Shatrughna, scorchers of enemies, were the sons of Sumitra. O lord! Janaka was the king of Videha and his daughter was Sita. Tvashtra[48] himself created her, so that she might be Rama’s beloved queen. I have thus recounted to you the births of Rama and Sita. O lord of men! I will now tell you about Ravana’s birth. Ravana’s great grandfather was the god Prajapati[49] himself, the self-creating great ascetic and the lord of all the worlds. He had a beloved son named Pulastya, born through his mental powers. Through a cow, that lord had a son by the name of Vaishravana. But he abandoned his father and went to his grandfather. O king! His father was angered at this. He created another self, based on his own self. In great wrath, the brahmana created Vishrava from half of himself, so that Vaishravana could be countered. But delighted, the grandfather conferred immortality on Vaishravana. He also made him lord of riches and a guardian of the worlds. He was given friendship with Ishana and a son named Nalakubara. His capital became Lanka, inhabited by masses of rakshasas.”’[50]

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‘Markandeya said, “The sage Vishrava was born from half of Pulastya’s body, out of his anger. He glanced at Vaishravana with great anger. O king! But on knowing that his father was extremely angry with him, Kubera, lord of the rakshasas, always tried to please him. Living in Lanka, the lord of the yakshas,[51] Naravahana, sent three rakshasis to serve his father. O tiger among the Bharata lineage! They were always ready to satisfy the great-souled rishi and were skilled in dancing and singing. O lord of the earth! Their names were Pushpotkata, Raka and Malini. O king! They were slender of waist and rivalled each other in trying to do their best. Being pleased with them, the

great-souled lord granted them boons. As they desired, he gave each of them a son, equal to a guardian of the world. Pushpotkata gave birth to two sons who were the lords of the rakshasas—Kumbhakarna and Dashagriva,[52] unmatched on earth in strength. Malini gave birth to a single son named Vibhishana. Raka gave birth to twins—Khara and Shurpanakha. Vibhishana surpassed all of them in beauty. He was immensely fortunate and always performed rites of dharma. Dashagriva was the eldest of them all and was a bull among the rakshasas. He was immensely energetic, immensely valorous, immensely spirited and brave. Kumbhakarna surpassed all of them in strength. He was a terrible stalker of the night and was frightening in battle because of his skills of maya. Khara was powerful in the use of the bow, hated brahmanas and ate raw flesh. The terrible Shurpanakha always used to obstruct religious rites. All of those brave ones were learned in the Vedas and all of them were good in the observance of their vows. They lived with their father on Mount Gandhamadana.

'"They saw Vaishravana Naravahana there. He was seated with his father and possessed great prosperity. Jealousy was born in them and they resolved to perform austerities. They pleased Brahma with terrible austerities. Dashagriva stood on one foot for a thousand years. He controlled himself and lived on the wind, amidst five fires.[53] Kumbhakarna lay down on the ground, controlled in his food and controlled in his vows. The wise and generous Vibhishana fasted and meditated, surviving on one dry leaf and performing severe austerities throughout the period. With delighted minds, Khara and Shurpanakha served them and protected them, while they tormented themselves with austerities. When one thousand years had passed, the invincible Dashanana[54] cut off one of his heads and offered it into the fire and the lord of the universe was pleased at this. Brahma then went there himself and asked them to refrain from austerities.

'"He tempted each of them separately with a boon. Brahma said, 'O sons! Stop! I am pleased with you. Ask for boons, except for immortality, and I will give you whatever you ask for. All the heads that you have offered into the fire out of your great desire, will be reunited with your body according to your wishes.[55] There will be no disfigurement of your body and you will be able to assume any form that you desire. There is no doubt that you will be able to vanquish your enemies in battle.' Ravana replied, 'May I never suffer defeat at the hands of gandharvas, gods, asuras, yakshas, rakshasas, serpents, kinnaras and demons.'[56] Brahma said, 'You will have no fear from all those you have mentioned, but for man. O fortunate one! This is the way I have ordained it.' At these words, Dashagriva was satisfied. Because of his evil intelligence, the man-eating one ignored men. In the same way, the great grandfather addressed Kumbhakarna. But since his reasoning was clouded by darkness, he asked for a long period of sleep. Granting this, he repeatedly spoke to Vibhishana, 'O son! Ask for a

boon. I am pleased with you.' Vibhishana replied, 'May my mind not turn towards adharma, even in times of supreme difficulty. O illustrious one! The brahmastra weapon cannot be instructed. May it become manifest in me.' Brahma said, 'O destroyer of enemies! Though you have been born in a rakshasa womb, your intelligence does not turn towards adharma. I am granting you immortality.' O lord of the earth! Having obtained this boon, rakshasa Dashagriva defeated the lord of riches[57] in battle and won Lanka from him.

'"The illustrious one left Lanka and went to Gandhamadana, followed by the gandharvas, the yakshas, the rakshasas and the kimpurushas. Ravana fought and won the Pushpaka vimana from him. Then Vaishravana cursed him. 'This will not bear you. It will carry the one who will kill you in battle. Since you have treated your elder[58] with contempt, you will soon perish.' O great king! Vibhishana, with dharma in his soul, followed him,[59] united with great prosperity. The illustrious lord of the riches was satisfied with his younger brother. The wise one made him the general of the armies of both the yakshas and the rakshasas. All the immensely strong and man-eating rakshasas and pishachas assembled together and instated Dashanana as the king. Dashagriva could assume any form at will and travel through the sky. Intoxicated with his strength, he attacked the daityas and the gods and robbed them of their jewels. Because he made the worlds scream, he came to be known as Ravana.[60] Dashagriva, with strength at will, caused fear among the gods."'

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'Markandeya said, "Then all the brahmarshis, siddhas and devarshis, with Agni leading them, went and sought refuge with Brahma. Agni said, 'O lord! Vishrava's son, Dashagriva, is immensely strong and cannot be killed, because you have earlier granted him a boon. The immensely strong one is oppressing all beings with injurious acts. O lord! Save us from him. There is no one else who can save us.' Brahma replied, 'O Vibhavasu![61] The gods and the asuras cannot defeat him in battle. What must be done to subdue him has already been ordained. For that purpose, at my request, the four-armed Vishnu, foremost among brave ones, has already descended on earth. He will accomplish this task.' The grandfather addressed these words to them. 'With the masses of gods, all of you take births on earth. To aid Vishnu, all of you beget brave sons on monkeys and bears, strong and capable of assuming any form at will.' At this, all the gods, the gandharvas and serpents happily descended on earth, with respective parts from their own bodies. In their presence, the god who is the granter of boons,[62] instructed a gandharva lady named Dundubhi so that the task of the gods might be accomplished. On hearing the grandfather's words, the gandharvi Dundubhi took the form of Manthara in the world of men. She was hunchbacked. All the foremost among

the gods, with Shakra at the forefront, begot sons on the chief women among monkeys and bears. All of them were like their fathers, in fame and strength. They could shatter the peaks of mountains. Their weapons were shala and tala, trees and rocks. All their bodies were capable of withstanding the vajra. They were endowed with great strength. They could assume strength and valour at will. They were skilled in fighting. Each possessed the strength of ten thousand elephants. They had the speed of the wind. Some of them lived where they wished. Others lived in the forest. Having thus decreed everything, the illustrious one, the creator of the worlds, instructed Manthara about what she should do and how she should go about it. On hearing his words, she carried them out with the speed of the mind. She went here and there, bent on creating enmity."'

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'Yudhishthira asked, "O illustrious one! You have separately related the births of Rama and each of the others. O brahmana! Now I wish to hear about the reasons for their exile. Please recount it. O brahmana! Why were Dasharatha's brave sons, Rama and Lakshmana, and the famous Maithili[63] exiled to the forest?"

'Markandeya said, "King Dasharatha was delighted at sons being born. He was devoted to rites and to the practice of dharma. He always served his superiors. In course of time, his sons grew and became greatly energetic. They became learned in the Vedas and their secrets and were skilled in the use of weapons. O king! When they had completed the period of brahmacharya, they got married. At each such time, Dasharatha was pleased and happy. Among them, the eldest was Rama and he was known thus because he pleased the subjects.[64] He was charming and wise and was the delight of his father's heart. Then the king thought that he was too advanced in age. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! He consulted his advisers and the priests, who were learned about dharma, about instating Rama as the heir apparent.[65] All of them, the best of advisers, thought that the appropriate time had arrived. His[66] eyes were red. His arms were large. His gait was like that of a mad elephant. His arms were long. His chest was broad. He was dark in complexion. His hair was curled. He was radiant, handsome and brave. He was like Shakra in his strength. He was learned in all dharma. He was like Brihaspati in his intelligence. Everyone was devoted to him. He was skilled in all forms of knowledge. He was in control of his senses. He was pleasant to behold, even to his enemies. He controlled those who were not virtuous. He protected those who followed dharma. He had fortitude. He was unassailable. He was victorious. He could not be vanquished. O descendant of the Kuru lineage! King Dasharatha looked at such a son, one who extended Kousalya's[67] joy, and was extremely delighted. On thinking about the qualities of the valorous and immensely energetic Rama, he happily spoke to his

priest. 'O fortunate one! O brahmana! There is an auspicious conjunction of Pushya nakshatra today. Let all the requirements be gathered and let Rama be invited.' Hearing these words of the king, Manthara went to Kaikeyi and spoke these words at the appropriate time. 'O Kaikeyi! The king has proclaimed your great misfortune today. O unfortunate one! A fierce, angry and virulent serpent is biting you. Kousalya is indeed the fortunate one, since her son will be instated. Where is your good fortune if your son does not obtain a share of the kingdom?' On hearing these words, she[68] adorned herself in all her ornaments. She was radiant in her supreme beauty, with a middle that was shaped like an altar. She approached her husband secretly. Smiling charmingly, as if in love, the sweet-smiling one spoke these honeyed words. 'You are always truthful in your promises. O king! You had earlier promised me a wish. Grant me that favour now and free yourself of the burden.' The king replied, 'I am ready to grant you the boon. You will get what you desire. Is there anyone who must be killed today, though he does not deserve to be killed? Is there any one imprisoned, who must be freed today? Who should be given riches today? Or is there anyone, from whom it must be taken away? All the riches are mine, except those that belong to brahmanas.' When she heard these words, she bound the king to his promise. Knowing her own strength, she spoke these words. 'Let Bharata be instated with the ingredients that have been arranged for Rama. Let Raghava[69] go to the forest.' The king heard these unpleasant and terrible worlds. O foremost among the Bharata lineage! He was so miserable that he could not say anything. On learning what his father had said, the valorous Rama, with dharma in his soul, went to the forest, so that the king might remain true to his promise. O fortunate one! He was followed by the prosperous Lakshmana, with the bow in his hand, and his wife Vaidehi Sita, Janaka's daughter.[70]

'"When Rama had departed for the forest, following the due dharma of time, King Dasharatha gave up his body. With Rama having left and the king having departed, the queen Kaikeyi had Bharata brought and spoke these words to him.[71] 'Dasharatha has gone to heaven. Rama and Lakshmana have left for the forest. Accept this large kingdom, without any obstacles, and with all its thorns removed.' On hearing these words, the one with dharma in his soul replied, 'You have committed a violent deed. Out of avarice for riches, you have killed your husband and destroyed this lineage. O mother! O destroyer of the lineage! You have brought ill fame on my head. Satisfy your desire now.' Speaking thus, he began to weep. Thus displaying his character before all the subjects, he left after his brother Rama, desiring to bring him back. He placed Kousalya, Kaikeyi and Sumitra in vehicles at the back. Then extremely miserably, he set out with Shatrughna, Vasishtha, Vamadeva, thousands of other brahmanas and residents of the city and the country, with the intention of bringing Rama back. He saw Rama and Lakshmana in Chitrakuta.[72] He had a bow in his hand and was adorned in the

ornaments of ascetics. But fixed on making his father's promise come true, Rama dismissed him. He ruled the kingdom from Nandigrama, with the sandals in front.[73] Rama was concerned that the inhabitants of the city and the country might return again. He entered the great forest near the hermitage of Sharabhanga. He paid his respects to Sharabhanga and found refuge in Dandakaranya. He lived in the beautiful region along the banks of the river Godavari.

'"While he lived there, because of Shurpanakha's deeds, Rama had a great enmity with Khara, who used to reside in Janasthana. In order to protect the ascetics, Raghava, devoted to dharma, killed fourteen thousand rakshasas on earth. By killing the immensely powerful Khara and Dushana,[74] the wise Raghava brought safety to that forest of dharma again. With those rakshasas slain, Shurpanakha, with her nose and lips sliced off,[75] went to her brother's abode in Lanka. Unconscious with grief, the rakshasi went to Ravana. With dried blood on her face, she fell down at her brother's feet. On seeing her so mutilated, Ravana became senseless with anger. He gnashed his teeth in anger and jumped up from his seat. He dismissed his advisers and privately asked her, 'O fortunate one! Who has done this to you, without thinking of me and disrespecting me? Who has had a sharp spear pierced all over his body? Who is sleeping securely and happily, having lit a fire by his head? Who has kicked a terrible and virulent serpent? Who has touched the teeth of a lion with manes?' While he was speaking these words, sparks of flame issued from the openings in his body, like from the hollows of a flaming tree at night. Then his sister told him everything about Rama's valour and the defeat of Khara and Dushana, accompanied by the other rakshasas. Having decided on what was to be done, having comforted his sister and having made due arrangements for the protection of the city, the king[76] rose up into the sky. He crossed the mountains Trikuta and Kala and saw the great and deep ocean, the abode of makaras. Dashanana passed over it and went to Gokarna,[77] the secure and beloved region of the great-souled wielder of the trident. Dashanana went to Maricha, his former adviser. Because of his fear of Rama, he had earlier become an ascetic."'

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'Markandeya said, "On seeing Ravana arrive, Maricha respectfully showed him homage and gave him fruits, roots and other objects. When the rakshasa had rested and was appropriately seated, the one who was skilled with words spoke these words to the one who was eloquent with words.[78] 'Your complexion is not in its natural state. Is everything well in your city? Do all your subjects honour you, as they used to do earlier? O lord of the rakshasas! What task has brought you here? Even if the task is difficult to accomplish, know that it has already been done.' Ravana told him everything about what Rama had done. After listening, Maricha briefly told him, 'You must not provoke

Rama. I am acquainted with his valour. Is there anyone who can withstand the force of the arrows of that great-souled one? The bull among men is responsible for my leading the life of an ascetic. What evil-souled one has directed you to this course of action that will take you to the mouth of destruction?' On hearing this, Ravana angrily berated him. 'If you do not act in accordance with my words, it is certain that you will meet with death.' Maricha then thought to himself, 'It is better to die at the hands of a superior being. Since death is certain, I will do what he wants me to.' Maricha then replied to the lord of the rakshasas. 'What help can I render you? I will do it even if I am not capable.' Then Dashagriva told him, 'Go and tempt Sita. Become a deer with jewels on its antlers and with a skin that is adorned with gems. It is certain that on seeing you, Sita will send Rama after you. With Kakutstha[79] gone, Sita will be in my powers. I will then abduct her. The evil-minded one will cease to exist because of separation from his wife. Render this help to me.' Having been thus addressed, Maricha performed the rites with water for himself.[80] Extremely miserable, he followed Ravana, who led the way. The two went to the hermitage of Rama, the one whose deeds were unsullied. They acted exactly as they had planned it earlier. Ravana assumed the form of an ascetic, with his head shaven and with a three-poled staff in his hand.[81] Maricha assumed the form of a deer and they went to that spot. Maricha showed himself to Vaidehi, in the form of a deer. Prompted by destiny, she sent Rama after him.

'"With a view to please her, Rama swiftly grasped his bow. He entrusted Lakshmana with the task of protecting her and went after the deer. He had his bow and had tied his quiver. He had his sword and guards for his arms and fingers. Rama followed the deer, like Rudra after the deer that is a star.[82] The rakshasa appeared before him and disappeared again, taking him far away. Rama knew him to be who he really was. Knowing him to be a traveller of the night,[83] the wise Raghava grasped an unfailing arrow and killed him, in the form of a deer. Struck by Rama's arrow, he imitated Rama's voice and called out, in a piteous voice, 'Alas, Sita! Lakshmana!' When Vaidehi heard those piteous words, she was about to run in the direction of the words. But Lakshmana spoke to her. 'O timid one! Do not be anxious. Who can strike Rama? O sweet-smiling one! You will see Rama return in a short while.' She was weeping. At these words, because of the tendency of women, she suspected her younger brother-in-law, though his pure character was his adornment. The chaste and faithful wife uttered harsh words. 'O stupid one! This is not the time for satisfying the desire in your heart. I would rather take a sword and kill myself, or throw myself from the peak of a mountain, or enter the fire, rather than abandon my husband Rama and serve a mean one like you, like a tigress waiting on a jackal.' Lakshmana loved Raghava and was always virtuous. On hearing these words, he covered up his ears and left for where Raghava was. He grasped a bow and followed Rama's footsteps.

'"Meanwhile, rakshasa Ravana made his appearance. Though he was wicked, he assumed a gentle form, like a fire hidden under ashes. He disguised himself as an ascetic, because he desired to abduct that unblemished one. On seeing him arrive, Janaka's virtuous daughter invited him, with fruits, roots, a seat and other things. But the bull among rakshasas ignored all this and assuming his own form, sought to appease Vaidehi. 'O Sita! I am the king of the rakshasas, famous as Ravana. My beautiful city of Lanka is located on the other side of the great ocean. Among the beautiful women who are there, you will shine with me. O one with the beautiful hips! Become my wife and abandon the ascetic Raghava.' When Janaki Sita heard words like these, the one with the beautiful hips covered up her ears and said, 'Do not speak such words. The sky may fall with its stars. The earth may be shattered. The fire may become cold. But I will not desert the descendant of the Raghu lineage. Can a she-elephant, after serving a giant elephant that is in musth and ranges the forest, touch a hog? How can a lady who has drunk choice liquor[84] and drunk nectar made out of honey, be attracted by the juice of the jujube tree?' Having spoken these words, she entered the hermitage again. Ravana followed the one with the beautiful hips and restrained her. Censured by his harsh words, she lost her senses. But he grasped her by the hair on her head and rose up into the sky. A vulture named Jatayu, who lived on a mountain, saw the ascetic lady being abducted, lamenting, 'Rama! Rama!'"'

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'Markandeya said, "The immensely valorous king of the vultures, Jatayu, was the son of Aruna and the brother of Sampati and was a friend of Dasharatha's. When the bird saw his[85] daughter-in-law in Ravana's arms, he angrily rushed at the lord of the rakshasas. The vulture told him, 'O traveller in the night! Let her go. Let Maithili go. How can you carry her off as long as I am alive? If you do not give up the daughter-in-law, you will not escape with your life.' Saying this, he powerfully attacked the Indra among rakshasas with his talons. He struck him with his wings and beak and lacerated him in many ways and large quantities of blood began to gush out,[86] like a mountain spring. Thus struck by the vulture, who wished to do that which would bring Rama pleasure, he grasped his sword and sliced off the wings of the bird. Having killed the king of the vultures, and looking like a mountain through scattered clouds, the rakshasa grasped Sita in his arms and rose up into the sky. Whenever Vaidehi saw a circle of hermitages, a pond, a river or a well, she loosened and flung down her ornaments. On the slopes of a mountain, she saw five bulls among monkeys. The intelligent one flung down an expensive and celestial garment there. Driven by the wind, the beautiful yellow garment fell down in the midst of those Indras among monkeys, like lightning in a cloud.

'"While Vaidehi was thus being carried away, the wise Rama had killed the great deer. While he was returning, he saw his brother Lakshmana. On seeing his brother, he

rebuked him. 'How could you leave Vaidehi in a forest infested with rakshasas?' He thought about his being drawn away by a rakshasa in the form of a deer and of his brother's arrival and was tormented by thoughts. Having rebuked him, Rama swiftly approached and said, 'O Lakshmana! Is Vaidehi still alive? I might not see her again.' Lakshmana then reported everything that Sita had told him, including the words that Vaidehi had spoken later. With a burning heart, Rama went towards the hermitage and saw the fallen vulture, like a mountain. Fearing him to be a rakshasa, Kakutstha drew his powerful bow and rushed towards him, together with Lakshmana. The energetic one then spoke to Rama and Lakshmana. 'I am the king of the vultures. O fortunate ones! I am a friend of Dasharatha's.' On hearing these words, they put aside their bright bows and asked, 'Who is this who is mentioning our father by name?' Then they saw that the wings of the bird had been sliced off. The vulture told them how Ravana had killed him, for Sita's sake. Raghava then asked the vulture for the direction in which Ravana had gone. Indicating this with a nod of his head, the vulture passed away. Kakutstha understood the sign of the gesture to mean the south. He performed the last rites in honour of his father's friend. They saw the hermitage, with its cushions and vessels scattered and its pots broken. The place was deserted and infested with an army of jackals. Overcome with unhappiness and grief at Vaidehi's abduction, the scorchers of enemies headed south, towards Dandakaranya. In that great forest, Rama, together with Soumitri,[87] saw many herds of deer running in different directions. They heard the terrible cries of many creatures, increasingly roaring like a forest fire.

'"In a short while, they saw Kabandha,[88] terrible in form. He was like a cloud or a mountain. His shoulders were as extensive as a shala tree. He had large arms. His large eye was located on his chest. He had a giant mouth on a giant belly. With great ease, the rakshasa grasped Lakshmana in his arms. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Soumitri was instantly overcome by despair. Then, glancing towards Rama, he dragged him[89] towards his mouth, and afflicted with despair, he[90] told Rama, 'Look at my state. Vaidehi has been abducted. I am in this dire state. You have been dislodged from your kingdom. Our father is dead. Together with Vaidehi, I will not witness your return to Kosala and your instatement in the earthly kingdom of our fathers and grandfathers. Fortunate are those who will see you consecrated with kusha grass, parched rice and *shami*[91] wood, with a face like the moon amidst scattered clouds.' In this way, the wise Lakshmana lamented in various ways. Undaunted in the midst of this calamity, Kakutstha told him, 'O tiger among men! Do not be immersed in sorrow in this fashion. While I am here, there is nothing he can do. Slice off his right arm, and I will sever the left.' While he was speaking, Rama cut off his left arm with his extremely sharp sword, as if it was branch of sesamum. On seeing his brother Raghava standing there, the powerful Soumitri hacked the right arm with his sword. Lakshmana repeatedly smote

the rakshasa on his side and losing his life, the gigantic Kabandha fell down on the ground. Then a divine-looking being was seen to emerge from his body. He was stationed in the sky, like the resplendent sun in the sky. The eloquent Rama asked him, 'Who are you? I am asking you. Tell me. How did this happen? It seems to me to be extraordinary.' He replied, 'O king! I am the gandharva Vishvavasu. Because of Brahma's curse, I had to be born in the womb of a rakshasa. Sita has been abducted by King Ravana, who resides in Lanka. Go to Sugriva and he will help you. Lake Pampa is near Mount Rishyamukha. It has pure water and teems with swans and ducks. Sugriva lives there with four advisers. He is the brother of Vali, the king of the monkeys who wears a golden garland. I can tell you this much. You will see Janaki again. It is certain that the king of the monkeys knows about Ravana's abode.' Having said this, to the amazement of the brave Rama and Lakshmana, the extremely radiant celestial being disappeared."'

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'Markandeya said, "Miserable at Sita's abduction, Rama then went to Lake Pampa, which was a short distance away. It was full of lotuses and blue lotuses.[92] The wind was pleasant and cool and the forest was redolent with the pleasant fragrance of amrita. There, his mind turned to his beloved. That Indra among kings remembered his beloved and lamented, tormented by the arrows of love. Soumitri told him, 'O one who honours those who are worthy! Such sentiments should not touch you, like a self-controlled man should not be tainted by disease or the conduct of the aged. You have obtained information about Vaidehi and Ravana. Now use manliness and intelligence to recover her. Let us go to Sugriva, the bull among monkeys in the mountain. Be comforted, since I, your disciple, servant and aide, am with you.' At these many different words of Lakshmana, Raghava recovered his natural state and thought about what should be done next. The brave brothers, Rama and Lakshmana, bathed in the waters of Pampa. After rendering offerings to the ancestors, they departed. They reached Mount Rishyamukha, full of many roots and fruits. The brave ones saw the five monkeys on the peak. Sugriva sent his wise adviser, the monkey Hanuman, who was as tall as a mountain, to them. Having first conversed with him, they went to Sugriva. O king! Rama then had an agreement of friendship with the king of the monkeys. When the monkeys were told about what had to be done, they displayed the garment that Sita had dropped while she was being abducted. Having thus obtained assurance, Rama himself instated Sugriva, the lord of the monkeys, as the king of all the monkeys on earth. Kakutstha also promised to kill Vali in battle. O king! Sugriva promised to bring Sita back.

'"Having thus concluded an agreement and having reposed trust in each other, all of them went to Kishkindha and based themselves there, desirous of doing battle. Having

reached Kishkindha, Sugriva let out a giant roar, like the noise of a flood. Vali could not tolerate this. But Tara[93] restrained him and said, 'From the manner in which the mighty monkey Sugriva is roaring, I think that he has obtained a protector. You should not go out.' At that, the eloquent Vali, adorned in a golden garland, the king of the monkeys, told Tara, whose face was like the lord of the stars,[94] 'You are familiar with the voices of all beings and you possess intelligence. See and find out whose protection this fake brother of mine has obtained.' Tara, with radiance like the lord of the stars, thought for an instant. Then the wise one spoke to her husband. 'O lord of the monkeys! Listen to everything. The immensely powerful Rama is Dasharatha's son and has lost his wife. That great archer has contracted an agreement of friendship with Sugriva, with one's enemy regarded as the other's too. His brother is unvanquished, mighty-armed and wise Soumitri Lakshmana, who stands by him for accomplishing the task. Mainda, Dvivida, the wind-god's son Hanuman and Jambavan, the king of the bears, are Sugriva's advisers and stand by him. All these great-souled ones are immensely strong and intelligent. Resorting to Rama's valour, they are enough for your destruction.' But the lord of the monkeys disregarded her words, which would have ensured his welfare. He was full of jealousy and suspected that her mind was attracted towards Sugriva. Having spoken harshly to Tara, he emerged from the mouth of his cave. He went to Sugriva, who was stationed near Malyavan and said, 'O foolish you! You are fond of life. But you have been defeated by me many times earlier. Considering our relationship, I have freed you earlier. Why do you wish to rush to your death again?' Thus addressed, Sugriva, the destroyer of enemies, spoke to his brother for a reason, as if to indicate to Rama that the time had come. 'O king! Know that I have been robbed of my wife,[95] and robbed of my kingdom, by you. What is the purpose of being alive? That is the reason I have approached you.' Speaking to each other in these and many other ways, Vali and Sugriva engaged in a fight, with shala trees, tala trees and rocks as weapons. They smote each other and flung each other down on the ground. Both of them moved wonderfully and struck each other with fists. Both of them dripped with blood, lacerated by nails and teeth. Those brave ones resembled blossoming kimshukas. No difference could be detected between the two fighters. Then Hanuman placed a garland around Sugriva's neck.[96] With that garland round his neck, the brave one was as radiant and handsome as Mount Malaya with a garland of clouds. Recognizing Sugriva through that mark, the great archer Rama drew his giant bow and chose Vali as a target. The twang of the bow was like the sound of a machine. Pierced in the heart through the arrow, Vali fell down. With his heart pierced and wounded, he began to vomit blood through his mouth. He saw Rama standing there, together with Soumitri. He rebuked Kakutstha and fell down unconscious on the ground. Tara saw him on the ground, like a dislodged lord of the stars. With Vali slain, Sugriva obtained Kishkindha back and also Tara, with a

face like the lord of the stars, now that her lord had fallen. Worshipped by Sugriva, the wise Rama lived on the beautiful slopes of Malyavan for four months.

'"Having arrived at his city of Lanka, Ravana was overcome by the force of desire. He instated Sita in a house that was like Nandana.[97] It was located near a grove of ashoka trees and was like the hermitage of an asectic. She wore the garb of an ascetic and thinking of her husband, became lean. She was devoted to fasting and austerities. The large-eyed one lived there in misery, surviving on fruits and roots. To guard her, the lord of the rakshasas appointed rakshasis. They held lances, swords, spears, axes, clubs and flaming brands. Some of them had two eyes, others had three eyes. Some had eyes on the forehead. Some had long tongues, others had no tongue. Some had three breasts and one leg. Others had three heads of matted hair and one eye. These and others had flaming eyes. Their hair was as ugly as that of a young camel.[98] Incessantly, night and day, they surrounded Sita. Those pishachis were gruesome to look at and had terrible voices. They always scolded the black-eyed one in terrible and harsh words. 'Let us eat her. Let us tear her into shreds that are as small as sesamum. She lives here, but she disregards our lord.' Thus did they censure and terrify her repeatedly. Afflicted with grief for her husband, she sighed and replied, 'O aryas! Eat me up swiftly. I have no desire to be alive, without the lotus-eyed one[99] who has dark and curly hair. Separated from my beloved, I would rather live without food and shrivel away my frame, like a serpent inside a tala tree. But for Raghava, I will not go to any other man. Know this to be the truth. And do what you wish with me, thereafter.' On hearing these words, the rakshasis, whose voices were grating, went and told the Indra of the rakshasas everything that had transpired.

'"When all of them had left, a rakshasi named Trijata, who was learned about dharma and pleasant in speech, comforted Vaidehi. 'O Sita! I will tell you something. O friend! Have trust in me. Give up your fear. O one with the beautiful thighs! Listen to my words. There is an intelligent and old bull among the rakshasas, by the name of Avindhya. With Rama's welfare in mind, and for your sake, he told me this. "Having comforted and assured Sita, tell her these words of mine. Her husband Rama, with the powerful Lakshmana following him, are both well. For your sake, the illustrious Raghava has become friends with the king of the monkeys, who is like Shakra in his energy. O timid one! Have no fear. Ravana is censured by the worlds. O unblemished one! You are protected by Nalakubara's curse. In earlier times, the evil one was cursed when he sought to obtain Rambha as his wife. This one is not in control of his senses. But he is incapable of forcibly violating any woman. Protected by Sugriva, and together with Soumitri, your wise husband will swiftly arrive here and will set you free. I have had an extremely terrible dream, signifying terrible calamity and the destruction of the evil-minded one who has demolished the lineage of Pulastya. That evil-souled roamer of the night is the performer of mean deeds and is terrible. Because of his nature and the

taint of wicked conduct, he increases the fear of all beings. Having lost his senses because of destiny, he challenges all the gods. In my dreams, I have seen all the portents of his destruction. Smeared in oil and with his head shaven, Dashanana was immersed in mud. He was stationed on a chariot drawn by donkeys and was dancing. I have seen Kumbhakarna and the others naked, with their heads fallen. They were decorated with red garlands and ointments and were being dragged towards a southern direction.[100] I have seen Vibhishana alone, climbing up Mount Shveta, decorated with white garlands and ointments, crowned, and with a white umbrella over his head. He and his four advisers, bedecked with white garlands and ointments, will climb Mount Shveta and be freed from this great danger. The earth and the oceans will be made turbulent with Rama's weapons. Your husband will fill the earth with his fame. I have seen Lakshmana, astride a collection of bones. He was eating honey and payasa. He was glancing in all the directions. I have seen you protected by a tiger, weeping and with your body covered in blood. You have repeatedly travelled in a northern direction. O Vaidehi! O Sita! You will soon be reunited with your husband Raghava, together with his brother, and will find joy."' When the maiden with the eyes of a young deer heard these words of Trijata, she became hopeful of again being reunited with her husband. When those terrible and extremely fearsome pishachis returned, they saw her seated with Trijata, as she had been earlier."'

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'Markandeya said, "She was sorrowful and miserable on account of her husband. She was attired in soiled garments and what remained of her gems and ornaments. She was devoted to her husband and was weeping. She was seated on a slab of stone and was served by the rakshasis. Oppressed by the arrows of love, Ravana came to see her. The gods, danavas, gandharvas, yakshas and kimpurushas had not managed to vanquish him in battle. Oppressed by Kandarpa,[101] he went to the grove of ashoka trees. He was radiant and was attired in celestial garments. He had resplendent and jewelled earrings. He wore colourful garlands and a crown and was like spring personified. Having adorned himself carefully, he looked like *kalpavriksha*.[102] But with all these adornments, he was as terrible as a *chaitya* tree[103] in a cremation ground. The traveller of the night approached the slender-waisted one, and looked like the planet Saturn approaching Rohini. Having greeted the one with the beautiful hips and struck by the arrows of the one who has the flower as a banner,[104] he spoke these words to the one who was as terrified as a doe. 'O Sita! You have shown favours towards your husband for a long time. O one who is slender in form! Show me your favours. You should be adorned. O one with the beautiful hips! Love me, adorned in expensive garments and ornaments. O beautiful one! Be the foremost among all my women. I have daughters of the gods and

the women of rajarshis. I have daughters of the danavas and the women of daityas. Fourteen crore[105] pishachas await my word and double that number of rakshasas, the eaters of men and the performers of terrible deeds. Three times that number of yakshas carry out my instructions. Only a few have sought refuge with my brother, the lord of riches. O fortunate one! O one with the beautiful thighs. When I am in my drinking hall, gandharvas and apsaras always attend on me, as they attend on my brother. I am the son of the brahmana rishi, the sage Vishrava himself. My fame is renowned as the fifth guardian of the world.[106] I eat celestial food and I have many different kinds of drink. O beautiful one! Whatever the thirty gods have, I possess that. Let all the evils of your sojourn in the forest be gone. O one with the beautiful hips! Be my wife, like Mandodari.'[107] Thus addressed, Vaidehi, the one with the beautiful face, turned her face away.

'"She thought of the traveller of the night as no more than a blade of grass and spoke to him, with inauspicious tears from her eyes drenching her firm breasts and beautiful thighs. Accepting her husband to be a god, Vaidehi spoke these words to the mean one. 'O lord of the rakshasas! I am unfortunate that I have had to listen to such words from you. I am miserable and unlucky that I have heard such words. O fortunate one! Be fortunate in your happiness, but turn these thoughts away. I am another man's wife and am always devoted to my husband. This helpless woman cannot be an appropriate wife for you. What pleasure will you find from violating a helpless woman? Your father is a brahmana. He was born from Brahma and is the equal of Prajapati. If you are the equal of a guardian of the world, how do you not follow dharma? Do you not have any shame at naming your brother, the lord of riches and the king of the yakshas,[108] the friend of the lord Maheshvara?' Having said this, the heavy-breasted Sita trembled and wept. The one who was slender in form covered her head and her face with her garment. Her hair was long and was braided well. Hanging from her head, it looked like a delicate and dark serpent. The indignant one was weeping. On hearing those extremely cruel words spoken by Sita and being rejected, Ravana, whose intelligence was wicked, spoke again. 'O Sita! Let the one with the makara on his banner burn my limbs through desire.[109] O one with the beautiful smile! O one with the beautiful hips! But I will not enjoy you against your wishes. What can I possibly do? Even now, you are devoted to Rama, a human who is nothing but our food.' Thus addressing the one with the unblemished limbs, the lord of masses of rakshasas instantly disappeared and went in whatever direction he desired. Surrounded by the rakshasis, Vaidehi was overcome by grief. Served by Trijata, she resided there."'

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'Markandeya said, "When Raghava, together with Soumitri, lived under Sugriva's

protection on the slopes of Malyavan, he saw the clear sky. In that clear sky, the destroyer of enemies saw the unblemished moon,[110] the planets, the nakshatras and the stars. The breeze was redolent with the fragrance of water lilies, blue lotuses and lotuses.[111] The dweller in that cool mountain was suddenly stirred. The one with dharma in his soul was distracted at the thought of Sita captive in the rakshasa's abode. One morning, he spoke to the brave Lakshmana. 'O Lakshmana! Go to Kishkindha and seek out the lord of monkeys. He is intoxicated and ungrateful, follows the dharma of the vulgar and is only learned about his own selfish interests. That stupid one, the worst of the lineage, has been instated by me in the kingdom and all the monkeys, apes[112] and bears show him homage. O mighty-armed one! O extender of Raghu's lineage! With your aid, it is for his sake that I slew Vali in the forest of Kishkindha. I think that worst of monkeys to be the most ungrateful on earth. O Lakshmana! That stupid one ignores me and does not know me now. I think that, because of his ignorance, he does not know how to honour an agreement. He ignores me, though I have performed a good deed for him. If he lazily indulges in the happiness of desires, you must send him along the path followed by Vali, the destination of all beings. O Kakutstha! But if that bull among monkeys acts to as to serve our purpose, quickly bring him here. Go without any delay.' Lakshmana was always devoted to the words of his elders. Thus addressed by his brother, he grasped his beautiful bow, arrows and the string of the bow and departed.

'"On reaching the gates of Kishkindha, he entered, without anyone stopping him. Thinking him to be angry, the king of the monkeys went out to welcome him. With his wife, and humble in soul, Sugriva, the king of the monkeys, welcomed him and happily offered homage to the one who should be honoured. Without any fear, Soumitri told him Rama's words. O Indra among kings! On hearing all this, Sugriva, the lord of the monkeys, joined his hands in salutation. With his servants and wives, he spoke these words to Lakshmana, elephant among men. 'O Lakshmana! I am not evil in intelligence. Nor am I ungrateful, or one without compassion. Listen to the efforts I have made to find Sita. Skilled monkeys have been sent by me in all the directions. One month has been decided for all of them to return. O brave one! The entire earth, with its forests, mountains, villages, towns and mines, girded by the ocean, will be searched by them. That month will be complete in another five nights. Then, together with Rama, you will learn about the great service I have rendered.' Thus addressed by the wise Indra among monkeys, Lakshmana happily discarded his anger and returned the homage to Sugriva. Accompanied by Sugriva, he returned to Rama, who was on the slopes of Malyavan, and told him about what had been done towards their objective. As had been said, the foremost among monkeys began to return in their thousands, those who had gone in the three directions, other than towards the south. They told Rama, 'We have searched the entire earth, with the ocean as a girdle. But we have not been able to see Vaidehi or Ravana.' Though his heart was grief-stricken at this, Kakutstha was still hopeful and

waited for the bulls among the monkeys who had gone in a southern direction.

'"When two months had passed, some monkeys hurriedly approached Sugriva and told him these words. 'O foremost among monkeys! O king! The great and extensive grove of Madhuvana was always protected by Vali. It is now being enjoyed by the son of the wind,[113] Vali's son Angada and other bulls among monkeys whom you had sent out in a southern direction.' Such acts were only possible by servants who had accomplished their duties. On hearing of this conduct, he[114] thought that they must have been successful. The wise bull among monkeys went to Rama and told him this. Rama also thought that Maithili must have been seen. When those monkeys, with Hanuman at the forefront, had rested, they approached the king of the monkeys, who was with Rama and Lakshmana. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! On observing Hanuman's gait and the complexion of his face, Rama was convinced that Sita must have been seen. The monkeys, with Hanuman at the forefront, were successful in their objective. They prostrated themselves before Rama, Sugriva and Lakshmana.

'"Rama picked up his bow and arrows and spoke to the ones who had arrived. 'Will you give me my life? Have you been successful? Having killed my enemies in battle and having recovered Janaka's daughter, will I again rule the kingdom of Ayodhya? I have been robbed of my wife and honour. As long as Vaidehi is not freed and my enemies are not killed in battle, I have no desire to be alive.' When Rama had spoken thus, the son of the wind replied. 'O Rama! My news is pleasant. Janaki has been seen by me. After searching the southern direction, with its mountains, forests and mines, we were exhausted. After some time, we saw a giant cave. We entered it and it was many yojanas long. It was dark, forested, deep and infested with insects. We traversed a long way through it and then we saw the splendour of the sun and a celestial palace nearby. O Raghava! That residence belonged to the daitya Maya. A lady ascetic named Prabhavati was engaged in austerities there. She gave us many objects to eat and drink. When we had regained our strength after eating, we proceeded along the road that she had pointed out. Emerging,[115] we saw the salty ocean and near it, the great mountains Sahya, Malaya and Dardura. Ascending Malaya, we beheld Varuna's abode and were extremely miserable, dejected and tired. We gave up all hope of life. We thought about this great ocean, which was many hundreds of yojanas wide. It was the abode of whales, crocodiles and large fish and we were extremely distressed. We decided to sit there and fast to death. In the course of our conversation, we began to talk about the vulture Jatayu. We then saw a terrible and fearsome bird that was as large as the peak of a mountain. It looked like another son of Vinata.[116] Desirous of eating us, it approached us and asked, "Who is it that is talking about my brother Jatayu? I am his elder brother Sampati and am the king of the birds. In a contest with each other, we rose up towards the seat of the sun. As a consequence of this, my wings were burnt, but not those of

Jatayu. That was the last time I saw my beloved brother, the king of the vultures. My wings having been burnt, I fell down on this giant mountain.” When he told us this, we told him about his brother being slain. We briefly told him about the calamity that had befallen you. O king! On hearing this, Sampati was extremely miserable. O destroyer of enemies! In a dejected frame of mind, he again asked us, “Who is Rama? Who is Sita? How was Jatayu killed? O supreme among monkeys! I wish to hear everything about all this.” I then told him everything about the misfortune that had befallen you and the reason for our deciding to fast to death. But that king of birds made us arise with his words. “I know Ravana and his great city of Lanka. I have seen it across the ocean, in a valley of Mount Trikuta. Vaidehi must be there. I have no doubt on this score.” Hearing him speak these words, we swiftly arose. O scorcher of enemies! We consulted about how one might cross the ocean. But no one had the courage to jump across the ocean. I invoked the energy of my father. With that, I jumped across the great ocean, a hundred yojanas, after having killed a water-dwelling rakshasi.[117] I then saw the faithful Sita in Ravana’s inner quarters. Eager to see her husband, she was fasting and engaged in austerities. Her hair was matted and her body was caked with dirt. She was lean, wretched and an ascetic. Knowing her to be Sita through these various signs, I approached her and spoke to her in private. “O Sita! I am a monkey who is the son of the wind-god. I am Rama’s messenger. Travelling through the sky, I have come here, hoping to see you. The brothers and princes, Rama and Lakshmana, are well. They are under the protection of Sugriva, the Indra of all the monkeys. O Sita! Rama, together with Soumitri, has asked about your welfare. Because of his sentiments of friendship, Sugriva has also asked about your welfare. Your husband will soon arrive here, with all the monkeys. O goddess! Have trust in me. I am a monkey and not a rakshasa.” Thinking for an instant about what I had said, Sita replied, “From what Avindhya has said, I know you to be Hanuman. Avindhya is a mighty-armed rakshasa, revered by the elders. He told me that Sugriva is surrounded by advisers like you. Go now.” Having said this, Sita gave me this jewel. The unblemished Vaidehi has worn it for a long time. Janaki also told me these words, so that you have your trust in me. O tiger among men! While dwelling on that great mountain of Chitrakuta, you hurled a straw at a crow. From this, you should believe.[118] Hearing this, I myself burnt down that city.’ Rama then honoured the one who had brought such pleasant news.”’

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‘Markandeya said, “While Rama was seated there with them, on Sugriva’s instructions, the foremost among the monkeys began to assemble there. Surrounded by one thousand crores of swift monkeys, Sushena, Vali’s illustrious father-in-law, came to Rama. Surrounded by one crore of monkeys, Gaja and Gavaya, the immensely valorous Indras among monkeys, separately made their appearance. O great king! Gavaksha was

terrible to look at and had the tail of a cow. He arrived with sixty thousand crore. The famous Gandhamadana lived in Gandhamadana. He brought one thousand crore of awesome monkeys. The intelligent monkey, Panasa, was immensely strong. He brought ten, twelve and thirty-five crore. The brave and aged monkey, by the name of Dadhimukha, was illustrious. He brought a great army of monkeys that were awesome in energy. Jambavan brought a hundred thousand crore of bears. They were dark and terrible in their deeds. Their foreheads were lined. There were many other leaders of herds of monkeys. O great king! Innumerable numbers assembled for the sake of Rama. They roared like lions, with the complexion of shirisha blossoms. As they ran around, a tumultuous sound was heard. Some were like the peaks of mountains. Others were like buffaloes. Some were like clouds in autumn. Others had faces that were like vermilion. The monkeys jumped up and fell down. They leapt up and raised dust. Monkeys arrived from all the directions. The large army of monkeys was like the ocean when it is full. On Sugriva's instructions, they set up their residences there. When all the Indras among monkeys had assembled from all the directions, when the lunar day was auspicious and so was the nakshatra, the illustrious Raghava marched out with Sugriva at the appointed hour. As if to shatter the world, the army was arranged in battle formations. Hanuman, the son of the wind-god, was in the front of the army. Soumitri, who was without any fear, protected the rear. The two Raghavas, with guards for the arms and the fingers, and surrounded by those foremost among monkeys, looked like the sun and the moon amidst the planets. That army of monkeys was armed with shala and tala trees and rocks as weapons. It looked like an extensive field of rice at the time of sunrise.

'"Protected by Nala, Nila, Angada, Kratha, Mainda and Dvivida, the extremely large army marched, for the sake of accomplishing Raghava's objective. Without any obstructions, it duly passed through extensive areas with a lot of roots and fruit, with an abundance of honey and meat and full of pure water and camped on the ridges of mountains. That army of monkeys then arrived at the salty ocean. That force, with its many pennants, looked like a second ocean. It went to the forest along the shore and began to reside there. Then, in the midst of the chiefs among the monkeys, Dasharatha's illustrious son told Sugriva words that were appropriate for the occasion. 'What do you think is the way to cross over the ocean? This army is large and the ocean is difficult to cross.' Some monkeys, who thought of themselves as learned, thought that the monkeys were capable of jumping over the ocean. Others thought of boats and other means of crossing. But having comforted all of them, Rama replied, 'No. O brave ones! All the monkeys are not capable of leaping over this expanse of one hundred yojanas. Therefore, this cannot be a firm view. There are not enough boats to bear this army. Besides, the interests of trade should not suffer because of us. Our army is vast and the enemy will look for weak spots.[119] The idea of leaping, or using boats, does not appeal to me. No. I will attack this treasure of water through some means and the one who

lives below[120] will then show me a way. If he does not show me a path, I will burn him up with great and unassailable weapons that flame with the fire and the wind.' Having said this, Raghava, together with Soumitri, touched the water, and basing themselves on an expanse of kusha grass, repulsed the ocean. Then the god of the ocean, the illustrious lord of male and female rivers, showed himself in a dream to Raghava, surrounded by masses of aquatic creatures. Surrounded by hundreds of stores of gems, he addressed him in sweet words. 'O son of Kousalya! O bull among men! Tell me what I can do to help you.' Rama told him, 'I am of the Ikshvaku lineage and can therefore be regarded as your relative.[121] O lord of the male and female rivers! I desire that you show me a path for my army, so that I can go and kill Dashagriva, the wretch of the Poulastya lineage. If you do not give me the path that I am asking for, I will dry you up with arrows that have been invoked with mantras to make them celestial weapons.' On hearing Rama's words, Varuna's abode[122] was extremely aggrieved and stood there, hands joined in salutation. It spoke these words. 'I do not wish to obstruct you, or create any obstacles. O Rama! Listen to my words. Having heard, decide on your course of action. If I grant a passage for your marching army at your request, others will use the strength of their bows to also command me. There is a monkey named Nala who is venerated by the artisans. He is the powerful son of the god Vishvakarma Tvashtra.[123] I will bear whatever he throws into me—wood, straw or stone, and that will become a bridge.' Having said this, he disappeared.

'"Rama told Nala, 'Build a bridge across the ocean. It is my view that you are capable of doing this.' Through this means, Kakutstha had a bridge constructed. It was ten yojanas wide and a hundred yojanas long. Even today, that is famous on earth as Nala's bridge. It was created on Rama's instructions and is established like a mountain. Vibhishana, the brother of the Indra of the rakshasas and with dharma in his soul, met Rama there, with his advisers, and the great-souled one welcomed him. Sugriva had his misgivings that he might be a spy. But Raghava satisfied himself about the truth through his actions, gestures and conduct and showed him the honours. He instated Vibhishana as the king of all the rakshasas and made him Lakshmana's adviser and well-wisher. O lord of men! In accordance with Vibhishana's instructions, within a month, he, together with his army, crossed the ocean over the bridge. Then, having reached Lanka, he caused its many and large gardens to be ravaged by the monkeys. Ravana had two rakshasa advisers named Shuka and Sarana. They disguised themselves as monkeys and came as spies, but Vibhishana had them caught. When those roamers of the night revealed their real forms of rakshasas, Rama had then shown to his army. Later, he let them go. Having set up the quarters for his army in a grove in the city, the brave one sent the wise monkey Angada as his messenger to Ravana."'

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‘Markandeya said, “That forest was full of many roots and fruits and had plentiful supplies of water. Kakutstha made his army live there and protected it appropriately. Following the sacred texts, Ravana fortified Lanka. It was naturally unassailable and had firm walls and turrets. There were seven moats filled with deep water, infested with fish and crocodiles. While these were invincible, they were bolstered with stakes made out of *khadira*.[124] It was difficult to attach because of catapults,[125] watchtowers and rocks. The soldiers had pots that were full of venomous snakes and resin powder. They were armed with clubs, firebrands, iron spikes, spears, swords and axes. There were shataghnis[126] and maces dipped in beeswax.[127] All the gates to the city were guarded by mobile and stationary posts. There were large numbers of infantry and many horses and elephants.

‘“Arriving at Lanka’s gate, Angada made himself known to the Indra of the rakshasas and entered fearlessly. In the midst of many crores of rakshasas, the immensely strong one was as radiant as the sun, surrounded by garlands of clouds. Having approached Poulastya, who was surrounded by his advisers, the eloquent one delivered Rama’s message. ‘O king! The immensely famous Indra of Kosala, Raghava, has sent you words that are appropriate to the occasion. Listen to them and act accordingly. Countries and cities that obtain kings who are unrefined in their souls and are the performers of injurious acts, are themselves injured and destroyed. You alone are guilty of forcibly abducting Sita. But this will lead to the destruction of others who are innocent. Intoxicated by strength and insolence, you have earlier injured many rishis who lived in the forest and have insulted the gods. You have killed rajarshis and abducted their weeping wives. The time has now come for the fruits of your evil deeds to be reaped. I will kill you, together with your advisers. Be a man on the field of battle. O stalker of the night! Though I am a mere human, you will witness the valour of my bow. Free Sita Janaki. If you do not release her, with my sharp arrows, I will rid the world of all rakshasas.’ Hearing the harsh words of the messenger, King Ravana could not tolerate them and became senseless with rage.

‘“At the signs of their lord, four stalkers of the night seized him[128] by his four limbs, like birds against a tiger. Angada leapt up onto a terrace of the palace, with the roamers of the night hanging onto his limbs. The force of his jump made the roamers of the night fall down on the ground, their hearts shattered from the blow. He again leapt and descended from the top of the palace. He jumped over the city of Lanka and returned to his army. The energetic monkey then went to the Indra of Kosala and told him everything. Praised by Raghava, he then rested. Then the descendant of the Raghu lineage, with the efforts of all the monkeys, who were as swift as the wind, had the walls of Lanka breached. With Lakshmana leading the way, Vibhishana and the lord of the bears[129] demolished the impregnable southern gate of the city. He[130] then invaded

Lanka with a hundred thousand crore of monkeys. They were skilled in battle and their complexions were as red as that of young camels.[131] The monkeys leapt up and jumped down and moved sideways. As a result of the dust that was raised, the sun became invisible and its light was dimmed. O king! In every direction, the rakshasas, with their wives and their elders, were amazed. They saw the walls turn tawny because of the monkeys, which seemed to be like shoots of rice, with the complexion of shirisha blossoms, like the rising sun and as white as reeds. They destroyed the pillars made of jewels and the turrets of the catapults. They shattered, broke and flung away the implements of war. With great strength, they grasped the shataghnis, chakras, iron bars and rocks, and with the force of their arms, hurled them into the middle of Lanka. Attacked by hundreds of monkeys, the masses of travellers in the night who were stationed on the turrets, ran away.

'"Then, on the instructions of their king, hundreds and thousands of rakshasas issued out. They could assume any form at will and their shapes were distorted. With a shower of arrows, they drove away the forest dwellers. Resorting to supreme valour, they established themselves on the walls. Those terrible-looking stalkers of the night cleared the walls of the monkeys and hung on there, like masses of flesh. Pierced by lances, many bulls among the monkeys fell down. Many stalkers of the night also fell down, crushed by broken pillars and ramparts. Thus the battle raged on between rakshasas and monkeys, as the brave ones pulled each other by the hair and fought and devoured with nails and teeth. The monkeys and rakshasas were struck, died and fell down on the ground there, but they did not let go of each other. Like clouds, Rama rained down a net of arrows. Having reached Lanka, those killed the stalkers of the night. The indefatigable and firm-bowed Soumitri sought out rakshasas who were stationed on the fortifications and killed them with iron arrows. With Lanka breached and the objective towards victory having been attained, on Raghava's orders, the army then withdrew."'

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'Markandeya said, "When those soldiers were quartered, some groups of Ravana's followers, pishachas and rakshasas, attacked them—Parvana, Putana, Jambha, Khara, Krodhavasha, Hari, Praruja, Aruja, Praghhasa and others. Remaining invisible, those evil-souled ones entered. But knowing this, Vibhishana removed their powers of invisibility. O king! On being seen, all of them were killed by the powerful monkeys, who could leap long distances, and fell down on the ground. Unable to tolerate this, Ravana marched out with his army. He erected a battle formation known as *ushanas*[132] and attacked the monkeys. On seeing Dashanana's army advance, Raghava also emerged and attacked the stalker of the night with a battle formation recommended by Brihaspati.[133] A battle then started between Rama and Ravana. Lakshmana fought with Indrajit, Sugriva with Virupaksha, Nikharvata with Tara, Nala with Tunda and Patusha

with Panasa. On that field of battle, using the strength of one's arms, everyone fought with another whom he considered to be a match. That terrible battle made one's body hair stand up, it was like the ancient one between the gods and the asuras. It kept on extending, increasing the fear of those who were cowards. Ravana attacked Rama with a shower of spears, lances and swords. Raghava attacked Ravana with sharp iron arrows. In a similar way, Lakshmana pierced Indrajit's heart. Indrajit pierced Soumitri with many arrows. Without hesitation, Vibhishana discharged at Prahasta, and Prahasta at Vibhishana, showers of sharp arrows that had the plumes of birds on the shafts. There was an encounter between powerful and great weapons. It afflicted all the three worlds and everything that was mobile and immobile."'

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'Markandeya said, "Then Prahasta suddenly rushed at Vibhishana. He was harsh in battle and struck him with a mace. Though struck by the mace with a terrible force, the intelligent and mighty-armed one did not stagger and stood firm like the Himalayas. Then Vibhishana grasped a gigantic and large spear that had a hundred bells attached to it. Invoking it with a mantra, he flung it at the other one's head. With the speed of the vajra, it descended with great force and sliced off the rakshasa's head. He was seen to fall down, like a tree struck by the wind. On seeing Prahasta, stalker of the night, killed in battle, Dhumraksha rushed at the monkeys with great speed. On seeing his terrible army, which was like a cloud, the bulls among the monkeys suddenly lost their heart in battle. On seeing the bulls among the monkeys suddenly lose their heart, Hanuman, tiger among monkeys and son of the wind-god, rallied them. O king! On seeing that the son of the wind was firmly established in battle, all the monkeys swiftly returned. There arose a great and tumultuous roar that made the body hair stand up. The soldiers of Rama and Ravana rushed at each other. In that terrible battle, which made the ground muddy with blood, Dhumraksha used his arrows to make the army of monkeys flee. But Hanuman, son of the wind-god and victorious over his enemies, swiftly grasped that mighty rakshasa. An awesome duel raged between the monkey and the brave rakshasa as they tried to kill each other, like that between Indra and Prahlada. The rakshasa struck the monkey with clubs and maces. The monkey struck the rakshasa with trees, complete with trunks and branches. Then the gigantic and intelligent Hanuman, son of the wind-god, killed Dhumraksha, with his horses, chariot and charioteer. On seeing the supreme rakshasa Dhumraksha killed, reassurance returned to the monkeys and they attacked and killed the soldiers. Thus slaughtered by the powerful and victorious monkeys, the rakshasas lost their resolution and fled towards Lanka in fear. The shattered remnants of the stalkers of the night retreated and returned to the city. On returning, they told King Ravana everything that had transpired.

'"On hearing that Prahasta and the mighty archer Dhumraksha, together with their

soldiers, had been killed in battle by the bulls among monkeys, Ravana sighed deeply and arose from his excellent seat. He said, 'The time has come for Kumbhakarna to act.' Saying this, he used many musical instruments, loud in their sounds, to awaken Kumbhakarna from his deep and prolonged sleep. He awoke him with a great deal of effort. When Kumbhakarna was no longer asleep and was comfortably seated, Dashagriva, the lord of the rakshasas, spoke these words to him. 'O Kumbhakarna! You are fortunate that you can sleep in this way. You do not know of the terrible and great fear that has arisen. Rama, with his monkeys, has crossed the ocean over a bridge. Ignoring all of us, he is engaged in a great slaughter. I have abducted his wife, Sita Janaki. So as to recover her, he had a bridge constructed over the great ocean. He has killed Prahasta and many of our relatives. O destroyer of enemies! No one other than you is capable of killing him. O supreme among strong ones! March out now. O tormentor of enemies! Kill Rama and all the others in battle. Accompanied by a large army, Dushana's younger brothers, Vajravega and Pramathi, will follow you.' Having thus spoken to the mighty Kumbhakarna, the lord of the rakshasas gave instructions to Vajravega and Pramathi about what they should do. Those two brave ones, Dushana's younger brothers, agreed to Ravana's instructions. With Kumbhakarna at the forefront, they marched out from the city."'

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'Markandeya said, "When Kumbhakarna marched out from the city with his followers, he saw stationed before him that army of monkeys, flush with victory. The monkeys came up to him and surrounded him from all sides. They struck him with many gigantic trees. Discarding their fear, others struck at him with their nails and teeth. Many monkeys, engaged in the path of battle, used different means of fighting and different weapons to attack the terrible Indra among rakshasas. Thus struck, he only laughed and began to devour the monkeys, like Panasa, Gavaksha and the monkey Vajrabahu. On witnessing the harrowing deed of the rakshasa Kumbhakarna, Tara and the others were extremely frightened and let out a large lament. Hearing Tara's cries and those of other chiefs among monkeys, Sugriva fearlessly rushed at Kumbhakarna. With great force, the high-minded elephant among monkeys arrived before Kumbhakarna and powerfully struck him on the head with a shala tree. Though the great-souled one struck Kumbhakarna on the head with great force, the shala tree hurled by the monkey Sugriva only broke and did not hurt him. It was as if he was suddenly awakened at the touch of the shala tree. Kumbhakarna laughed and roared and seized Sugriva with great force. On seeing Sugriva grasped by the rakshasa Kumbhakarna, the brave Soumitri, the delight of his friends, rushed forward. Lakshmana, the destroyer of enemy warriors, unleashed an extremely swift and extremely large arrow, with golden tufts, at Kumbhakarna. That arrow pierced through his body armour and body. Covered with

blood, it then penetrated the earth. With his heart shattered, the great archer Kumbhakarna released the lord of the monkeys. Grasping a rock as a weapon, he aimed that large rock and rushed at Soumitri. While he was advancing, he[134] sliced off two of those upraised arms with arrows that were sharp like razors and he[135] then became four-armed. But Soumitri sliced off all those arms, which held rocks as weapons, with arrows that were like razors. The body now assumed a gigantic size, with many legs, heads and arms and looked like a mass of rocks. Soumitri burnt it down with brahmastra. Struck by that celestial weapon, the immensely valorous one fell down in battle, like a tree that has been burnt and uprooted by a stroke of lightning.

'"On seeing the swift Kumbhakarna, who was like Vritra, fall down lifeless on the ground, the rakshasas fled in fear. On seeing the warriors run away, Dushana's younger brothers restrained them and angrily attacked Soumitri. On seeing Vajravega and Pramathi wrathfully advance towards him, Soumitri attacked them with feathered shafts. O Partha! A terrible battle raged between Dushana's younger brothers and the intelligent Lakshmana and it made the body hair stand up. He enveloped the rakshasas with a large shower of arrows. Those two brave ones also angrily rained down on him. That extremely terrible battle between Vajravega and Pramathi and the mighty-armed Soumitri lasted only for a short instant. The Hanuman, son of the wind-god, grasped the peak of a mountain and attacked Vajravega, taking away his life. The immensely strong monkey, Nila, rushed at Dushana's younger brother Pramathi and crushed him with a large rock. There was again a terrible battle between the forces of Rama and those of Ravana, as they attacked each other. The forest-dwelling ones killed rakshasas by the hundreds and rakshasas killed the forest-dwelling ones.[136] But the number of rakshasas killed was more than that of monkeys."'

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'Markandeya said, "On hearing that Kumbhakarna with his followers, the great archer Prahasta and the immensely energetic Dhumraksha had been killed in battle, Ravana spoke to his son, the brave Indrajit. 'O destroyer of enemies! Kill Rama, Sugriva and Lakshmana. O good son! You have earned a blazing renown for me by vanquishing in battle Shachi's consort, the thousand-eyed one and the wielder of the vajra.[137] O destroyer of enemies! O supreme among those who wield weapons! Remain invisible or visible. Use the divine weapons obtained as boons. Kill my enemies. O unblemished one! Not to speak of the others, even Rama, Lakshmana and Sugriva are incapable of withstanding the touch of your arrows. O unblemished one! O mighty-armed one! Even Prahasta and Kumbhakarna could not complete the task of avenging Khara. Go and accomplish that in battle. Using your sharp arrows, kill my enemies and their soldiers today. O son! Increase my delight, as you have done in the past by making Vasava

captive.' O king! Having heard these words, Indrajit agreed. He donned his armour and mounted on his chariot, made his way towards the battlefield.

'"The bull among rakshasas then announced his name and challenged Lakshmana, who bore auspicious signs, to a duel. Lakshmana grasped his bow and arrows and slapping the palms of his hands, rushed forward, creating terror, like a lion among small animals. A terrible and fierce battle started between those two, both of whom desired victory, were skilled in use of divine weapons and defied each other in prowess. When Ravana's son, supreme among strong ones, could not get the better of his adversary through arrows, he tried harder. With great force, he hurled many javelins at him. But Soumitri sliced those down with his sharp arrows. Cut down with those sharp arrows, they fell down on the ground. Then Vali's illustrious son, Angada, uprooted a tree and rushing at Indrajit with great force, struck him on the head with it. However, the brave Indrajit was unperturbed. He grasped a lance and hurled it at his chest. But Lakshmana cut it down. The brave Angada was near him and Ravana's son struck the bull among monkeys on the side with a club. Vali's brave son ignored the blow. The one who was victorious over his enemies wrathfully hurled the trunk of a shala tree at Indrajit. O Partha! That tree, angrily hurled for the purpose of killing Indrajit, destroyed his chariot, together with the horses and the charioteer. With the horses and the charioteer dead, he jumped down from the chariot. O king! Ravana's son instantly disappeared through the use of maya. Knowing that the rakshasa was skilled in many forms of maya and could become invisible, Rama arrived at that spot to protect his army. He then aimed his arrows, obtained through boons, at Rama and pierced the immensely strong Lakshmana all over his body. The brave Rama and Lakshmana fought with Ravana's son, who remained invisible through the use of maya and fought them with his arrows. In great anger, he unleashed hundreds and thousands of arrows at all the limbs of those lions among men. On seeing that he was invisible while showering down arrows, the monkeys grasped large rocks and took to the sky. However, the rakshasa was invisible. Ravana's brave son used maya and oppressed them severely with his arrows. Struck by the arrows, the two brave brothers, Rama and Lakshmana, fell down from the sky to the ground, like the sun and the moon."'

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'Markandeya said, "When he saw that the infinitely energetic brothers had fallen down, Ravana's son bound them down with arrows obtained through a boon. Those brave ones, tigers among men, were bound down by Indrajit's arrows in battle, like birds trapped in a cage. On seeing them fallen down on the ground, covered in hundreds of arrows, Sugriva, the king of the monkeys, stood around them with all the other monkeys—Sushena, Mainda, Dvivida, Kumuda, Angada, Hanuman, Nila, Tara and Nala. Vibhishana, accomplished in his deeds, arrived at the spot. He brought the brave ones

back to consciousness with the weapon known as *prajna*.[138] Using the great herb *vishalya*,[139] invoked with a divine mantra, Sugriva removed the thorns of arrows from their bodies. With the arrows removed from their bodies, those foremost among men recovered their senses. In a short while, the maharathas were freed from pain and fatigue. O Partha! Seeing that Rama was freed of his fever, Vibhishana joined his hands in salutation and told the descendant of the Ikshvaku lineage, 'O destroyer of enemies! This guhyaka has arrived here from Mount Shveta. He has brought this water on the instructions of the king of the yakshas.[140] O scorcher of enemies! The great king Kubera has sent this water so that you are able to see invisible beings. When this water has touched your eyes, you, and whoever else you give the water to, will be able to see all beings that are invisible.' Having agreed to this, Rama accepted the consecrated water and purified his eyes with it. So did the great-minded Lakshmana, Sugriva, Jambavan, Hanuman, Angada, Mainda, Dvivida, Nila and almost all the chiefs among monkeys.

'"Having accomplished his task, Indrajit went and told his father what he had done. Having told him this, he returned to the field of battle. Desirous of battle, he angrily advanced again. With Vibhishana's advice, Soumitri attacked him. He was flush with victory and had not yet performed his daily rites.[141] Having recovered his senses, Lakshmana was desirous of killing the enemy and angrily assailed him with arrows. Each warrior wished to vanquish the other and a battle began between them. It was extremely extraordinary, like that between Shakra and Prahlada. Indrajit pierced Soumitri with sharp arrows that penetrated the heart. Soumitri wounded Ravana's son with arrows that were like fire to the touch. Touched by Soumitri's arrows, Ravana's son was senseless with rage. He discharged eight arrows at Lakshmana, virulent as serpents. But listen carefully as I tell you how the brave Soumitri killed the other one with three feathered arrows that were like fire to the touch. Through one of these, he sliced off the arm that wielded the bow from the body. With the second one, he dropped the arm that held the iron arrows on the ground. The third arrow was lustrous and wide. With this, he cut off the head, which had a beautiful nose and was adorned with earrings. Severed of the head and the arms, the torso looked terrible. Having killed him, the supreme among strong ones, killed his charioteer with arrows. The horses dragged the chariot to Lanka and Ravana saw the chariot, bereft of his son. Knowing that his son had been killed, Ravana was overcome by grief and his eyes widened in fear. He was about to kill Vaidehi. She was in the ashoka grove, yearning to see Rama. The evil-souled one grasped a sword and rushed to her. Listen. Seeing that the one with evil intelligence had decided on this evil act, Avindhya calmed down the enraged one, giving him these reasons. 'You are established as a great king. You should not kill a woman. This woman is captive in your house and is already dead. In my view, she will not be killed through the destruction of her body. Kill her husband. When he is dead, she will be dead.

Shatakratu is not your equal in valour. In battle, you have frightened Indra and the thirty gods several times.' With these and similar words, Avindhya pacified the angry Ravana and he accepted the advice. The stalker of the night resolved to march out himself. Having sheathed his sword, he instructed that his chariot should be prepared."'

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'Markandeya said, "Angry at the death of his beloved son, Dashagriva ascended his chariot and marched out, adorned in gold and gems. He was surrounded by terrible rakshasas, with many weapons in their hands. He scattered the foremost among monkeys and advanced towards Rama. While he was angrily advancing, Mainda, Nila, Nala, Angada, Hanuman and Jambavan, together with their soldiers, surrounded him. In Dashagriva's sight, those bulls among bears and monkeys destroyed his soldiers with trees. When he saw that his soldiers were being annihilated by the enemy, Ravana, the lord of the rakshasas and skilled in maya, resorted to maya. Hundreds and thousands of rakshasas were seen to emerge from his body. They held arrows, lances and swords in their hands. But Rama destroyed all those rakshasas with his divine weapons. The lord of the rakshasas then resorted to maya again. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Dashanana created forms that looked like Rama and Lakshmana and they rushed towards Rama and Lakshmana. O king! On reaching Rama and Lakshmana, those stalkers of the night descended on them, with long bows in their hands. On witnessing the maya of the Indra among rakshasas, the dauntless Soumitri, the descendant of the Ikshvaku lineage, spoke these words to Rama. 'Kill those evil-souled rakshasas, who have forms like yours.' Rama then slew the ones who looked like him.

'"Then, in that field of battle, Shakra's charioteer, Matali, arrived before Rama in a chariot that was as radiant as the sun and was yoked to tawny horses. Matali said, 'This is the supreme chariot that belongs to Maghavan himself. It is named Jaitra and is yoked to tawny horses. O Kakutstha! O tiger among men! Shakra used this splendid chariot in the war against daityas and danavas and killed hundreds. O tiger among men! Swiftly ascend this chariot, driven by me in battle. Defeat Ravana in battle. Do not delay.' When he heard Matali's words, Raghava was suspicious, thinking that this might be more maya on the part of the rakshasa. But Vibhishana told him, 'O tiger among men! This is not the maya of the evil-souled Ravana. O immensely radiant one! Therefore, swiftly mount Indra's chariot. Delighted, Kakutstha told Vibhishana that he would act accordingly. He mounted the chariot and angrily advanced towards Dashagriva. When Ravana advanced towards him, all the beings began to lament. The gods roared like lions in heaven and sounded drums. The stalker of the night hurled an extremely terrible javelin at Rama, like Indra's vajra and like Brahma's raised staff. Rama cut that javelin down with sharp arrows. On witnessing that difficult deed, Ravana was overcome by fear. Dashagriva was angered and released thousands and

tens of thousands of sharp arrows and other kinds of weapons at Rama—*bhushundis*,[142] javelins, clubs, axes, different kinds of spears, shataghnis and arrows sharp as razors. On seeing the distorted maya created by the rakshasa Dashagriva, all the monkeys were scared and fled in all the directions. At that, Kakutstha took a supreme arrow out of his quiver. It was excellent in the head and in the shaft and had a golden shaft. He invoked it with brahmastra and fixed it to his bow. When Rama invoked that excellent arrow with the mantra of brahmastra, on witnessing that, all the gods and the gandharvas, with Indra at the forefront, rejoiced. With the invocation of brahmastra, all the gods, gandharvas and kinnaras thought that the rakshasa only had a short span of life left now. Rama then released the arrow, unmatched in its energy. It was terrible and resembled Brahma's raised staff, destined to kill Ravana. It enveloped the foremost among rakshasas, with his chariot, horses and charioteer, in a great mass of blazing flames. The thirty gods, together with the gandharvas and the charanas, were delighted to see that Ravana had been killed by Rama, whose deeds were unsullied. The five elements departed from the immensely fortunate Ravana. Through the energy of brahmastra, he was deprived of all the worlds. The ingredients of his body, together with his flesh and blood, were burnt so much by the brahmastra that even the ashes could not be seen."'

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'Markandeya said, "Having killed the mean Ravana, the Indra of the rakshasas and enemy of the gods, Rama, together with Soumitri, was extremely delighted. Dashagriva having been slain, the gods, with the rishis at the forefront, praised the mighty-armed one and pronounced benedictions of victory over him. All the gods praised the lotus-eyed Rama, as did the gandharvas and residents of heaven, and showered down flowers and words of praise. Having thus honoured Rama, they returned to where they had come from. O one without decay! It was as if a great festival was being held in heaven.

'"Having killed Dashagriva, the immensely famous lord Rama, the destroyer of enemy cities, handed Lanka over to Vibhishana. The immensely wise and aged adviser Avindhya emerged, with Sita at the forefront, and with Vibhishana leading the way. With great humility, he told the great-souled Kakutstha, 'O great-souled one! Accept this goddess. Janaki is of good conduct.' Hearing these words, the descendant of the Ikshvaku lineage descended from his supreme chariot. He looked at Sita, who was enveloped in tears. Her limbs were beautiful and she was seated on a vehicle, oppressed by grief. All her limbs were covered with dirt. Her hair was matted. She was attired in a black garment. On seeing her, Rama was concerned that Vaidehi had been touched by another. He told her, 'O Vaidehi! You are free. Go. I have done my duty. O fortunate one! You once had me as a husband and therefore, I did not think that you should grow old in the house of that rakshasa. Hence, I killed the stalker of the night. How can a

man like me, who knows the ways of dharma, accept a woman, even for an instant, who has been held in another man's arms? O Maithili! Whether you are of good conduct or evil conduct, I no longer have any interest in enjoying you now. You are like oblations that have been licked by a dog.' On hearing these terrible words, the young goddess suddenly fell down on the ground, like a severed plantain tree. Her face had been flush with delight. But that disappeared in an instant, like breath on a mirror. Hearing these words spoken by Rama, all the monkeys, together with Lakshmana, stood around motionless, as if they were dead.

'"Then the pure-souled and four-faced god, the grandfather and the creator of the world,[143] descended from a celestial chariot and appeared before Raghava, as did Shakra, Agni, Vayu, Yama, Varuna, the illustrious lord of the yakshas and the unblemished saptarshis. King Dasharatha arrived in a radiant and divine form, astride an extremely expensive celestial chariot that was resplendent and was drawn by swans. The firmament was then crowded with all the gods and gandharvas. It was as beautiful as the autumn sky, studded with stars. The illustrious Vaidehi arose in their midst and the beautiful one spoke these words to Rama, whose chest was wide. 'O prince! I do not blame you, because I know the ways of women and of men. But listen to these words of mine. The air that is inside beings is always in motion. If I have committed an evil act, let it free my breath of life. If I have committed an evil act, let fire, water, space, earth and air[144] free my breath of life.' Then a sacred voice spoke from the firmament. It echoed in all the directions and gladdened the great-souled monkeys. Vayu said, 'O Raghava! This is the truth. I am the wind that is always in motion. O king! Maithili is without taint. Unite with your wife.' Agni said, 'O descendant of the Raghu lineage! I am the wind that resides in the bodies of all beings. O Kakutstha! Maithili has not committed a crime, even in the slightest way.' Varuna said, 'O Raghava! The juices in the bodies of beings owe their existence to me. I am asking you to accept Maithili back.' Brahma said, 'O son! This action on your part is not surprising. You are acquainted with the dharma of rajarshis. You are virtuous and follow the path of good conduct. Listen to these words of mine. O brave one! You have brought down the enemy of the gods, the gandharvas, the serpents, the yakshas, the danavas and the maharshis. Through my favours, he had earlier become invincible to all beings. For a specific reason, I ignored that evil one for some length of time. It was for the sake of his own death that the evil-souled one abducted Sita. But I protected her through Nalakubara's curse. He had earlier been cursed by him[145] that if he forced himself on any woman against her wishes, his head was certain to shatter into a hundred fragments as a consequence. O immensely radiant one! You should not have any doubt on this. You are the equal of the gods and the immortals and you have performed a great deed.' Dasharatha said, 'O son! O fortunate one! I am pleased with you. I am your father Dasharatha. O supreme among men! I grant you permission to rule the kingdom.' Rama replied, 'O Indra among kings!

I bow down before you, if you are indeed my father. On your instructions, I will go to the lovely city of Ayodhya.' O lord of men! On hearing these words, his father was delighted and said, 'O Rama! O one with the red eyes! Go and rule Ayodhya.' Bowing to the gods and worshipped by his well-wishers, he was united with his wife, like the great Indra with Poulomi.[146] The scorcher of enemies then granted a boon to Avindhya and honoured and gave riches to the rakshasi Trijata. Brahma and all the gods, with Shakra at the forefront, then told him, 'O son of Kousalya! What boons that you desire shall we grant you today?' Rama chose devotion to dharma, victory over enemies and revival of the monkeys who had been killed by the rakshasas. O great king! When Brahma pronounced words granting this, all the monkeys regained their senses and arose. The immensely fortunate Sita granted a boon to Hanuman and said, 'O son! You will live for as long as Rama's fame lasts. O Hanuman! O one with the yellow eyes! Through my favours, divine delicacies will always be present before you.' Then, while all those with unsullied deeds watched, the gods, with Shakra leading the way, vanished.

'"On seeing Rama united with Janaki, Shakra's charioteer was extremely delighted and, in the midst of his well-wishers, spoke these words. 'O one for whom truth is valour! You have removed the misery of the gods, the gandharvas, the yakshas, men, asuras and serpents. Therefore, all the worlds, with the gods, the asuras, the gandharvas, the yakshas, the rakshasas and the serpents will speak of your deeds as long as the earth exists.' Speaking these words to Rama, supreme among all wielders of weapons, he[147] took his leave and having honoured him, departed in the chariot that was as resplendent as the sun. With Sita at the forefront, together with Soumitri, together with all the monkeys, with Sugriva leading the way, Rama arranged for the protection of Lanka. With Vibhishana at the forefront, he again crossed the bridge over the abode of sharks.[148] Surrounded by his chief advisers who followed him, he used the Pushpaka vimana, which travelled through the sky and could go wherever it willed.[149] With all the monkeys, the king with dharma in his soul stayed for a while on the shores of the ocean, where he had slept earlier. When the time was right, Raghava assembled them and honoured them. He satisfied them with gems and gave them leave to depart. When the chiefs among monkeys, the monkeys with tails like cows and the bears had left, Rama returned to Kishkindha with Sugriva. With Vibhishana following and with Sugriva, from Pushpaka vimana, he showed Vaidehi the forest. Having arrived at Kishkindha, Rama, foremost among warriors, instated Angada, who had accomplished his appointed tasks, as the heir apparent.[150] Together with them, and with Soumitri, Rama followed the same road[151] towards his city. Having reached Ayodhya, the lord of the kingdom sent Hanuman as a messenger to Bharata and he[152] observed the signs and told him[153] all the pleasant news. When Vayu's son had returned, he[154] went again to Nandigrama. He saw Bharata there, his limbs covered with dirt and attired in

garments made of bark, seated on his seat, with Rama's sandals before him. O bull among the Bharata lineage! Having been united again with Bharata and Shatrughna, valorous Raghava, together with Soumitri, rejoiced. On being reunited with their elder and on seeing Vaidehi, Bharata and Shatrughna were delighted. Having held the kingdom as a honoured trust, Bharata was extremely happy and returned it to the one who had come back. On an auspicious day, under the nakshatra Vaishnava,[155] Vasishtha and Vamadeva consecrated the brave one. Having been consecrated, he granted leave to his well-wishers to depart for their homes—Sugriva, foremost among monkeys, and Vibhishana, the son of Pulastya. He honoured them with all kinds of jewels and they were extremely happy and rejoiced. Having done his duty, he unhappily gave them permission to go. Having shown homage to Pushpaka vimana, Raghava, the descendant of the Raghu lineage, happily returned it to Vaishravana.[156] Assisted by the devarshis, he performed ten horse sacrifices, without any obstructions, on the banks of the Gomati, where three times the normal stipends were given."'[157]

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'Markandeya said, "Thus did the mighty-armed Rama, whose energy was infinite, confront misfortune and live in the forest in earlier times. O tiger among men! Do not grieve. O scorcher of enemies! You are a kshatriya. On the basis of the valour of your arms, you are traversing a road that is blazing in its resolution. Not even the slightest bit of sin is to be found in you. Even Indra, and the gods and the asuras, may become despondent along this path. Together with the Maruts, the wielder of the vajra killed Vritra, the invincible Namuchi and the rakshasi Dirghajihva.[158] Everything in this world stays with those who have aides. Who cannot be overcome in battle by someone who has Dhananjaya as his brother? Bhima is terrible in his valour and is foremost among strong ones. Madri's two twin sons are young and great archers. O scorcher of enemies! With such aides, why do you grieve? With such aides, you can vanquish the soldiers of the wielder of the vajra, together with the Maruts. O bull among the Bharata lineage! With such great archers as aides, who are the equals of the gods, you will vanquish all your enemies in battle. Look at Droupadi Krishna. She was abducted forcibly by the evil-souled Saindhava, who was intoxicated with his valour. But these great-souled ones accomplished the difficult task of obtaining her back, after vanquishing and subjugating King Jayadratha. Rama got Vaidehi back without any such allies. Through his terrible valour, he killed the rakshasa Dashagriva in battle. O king! Use your own intelligence to think about this. Monkeys and black-faced bears were his allies, creatures from a different species. O best of the Kurus! O bull among the Bharata lineage! Therefore, do not sorrow. O scorcher of enemies! Great-souled ones like you do not sorrow."'

Vaishampayana said, 'Thus consoled by the intelligent Markandeya, the king

discarded his weakness of spirit and spoke again.'

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'Yudhishthira asked, "O great sage! I do not grieve for myself, or for my brothers, or for the loss of the kingdom, but for Drupada's daughter. When we were oppressed by those evil-souled ones at the game of dice, we were saved by Krishna. But she was again forcibly abducted from the forest by Jayadratha. Have you ever seen, or heard of, a woman as immensely fortunate and as devoted to her husbands as Drupada's daughter?"

'Markandeya said, "O king! O Yudhishthira! Hear about the great fortune of a lady born in a high lineage. The princess Savitri obtained everything. There was a king in the land of Madra. He had dharma in his soul and was extremely devoted to dharma. The great-souled one was devoted to brahmanas, was united with the truth and had conquered his senses. That king had the name of Ashvapati. He performed sacrifices, was generous in giving and was skilled. He was the beloved of the citizens and the inhabitants of the countryside. He was engaged in the welfare of all beings. He was forgiving and truthful and had conquered his senses. He had no offspring. Because he was advancing in years, he was concerned. In order to obtain offspring, he resorted to severe rites. When it was time to eat, he restricted his food. He became a brahmachari and conquered his senses. O supreme among kings! He offered a hundred thousand oblations to Savitri.[159] He ate in limited quantities and skipped every sixth meal. He lived with these rules for eighteen years. When eighteen years were over, Savitri was pleased. O king! She arose from the agnihotra,[160] and with great delight, showed herself to the king. The one who grants boons then spoke these words to the king. 'O king! I am satisfied with your brahmacharya, purity, self-control, rituals and your wholehearted devotion. O Ashvapati! O king of Madra! Ask for whatever boon you desire. But do not make the mistake of disregarding dharma.' Ashvapati replied, 'I am desirous of dharma and have observed these rites because I desire offspring. O goddess! May I have many sons who extend my lineage. O goddess! If you are pleased with me, then I ask for this boon. The brahmanas have told me that obtaining offspring is the supreme dharma.' Savitri said, 'O king! Knowing of your intentions in advance, I have already spoken about your objective of obtaining sons to the grandfather.[161] O pleasant one! Through the favours granted to you on earth by the self-creating one, an energetic daughter will soon be born to you. You need not make any reply to this.[162] I am delighted and am telling you this on behalf of the grandfather.' The king acknowledged Savitri's words and requested that, through her favours, this might occur soon. When Savitri had disappeared, the king returned to his own house. He lived happily in his kingdom and protected the subjects according to dharma.

'"Some time passed. The king, who was regulated in his vows, impregnated the womb

of his eldest queen, who was devoted to dharma. O bull among the Bharata lineage! The embryo in the womb of the princess of Malava grew,[163] like the lord of the stars[164] in the sky during shuklapaksha. At the right time, she gave birth to a daughter who had eyes like a lotus. The king happily performed the rites for her. Because she had been given by Savitri when oblations with savitri[165] had been rendered, the brahmanas and her father gave her the name of Savitri. The king's daughter grew, like Shri[166] personified. In due course of time, the girl became a maiden. Her waist was slender and her hips were broad. She was like a golden image. On seeing her, people thought that they had obtained a celestial maiden. Her eyes were like the petals of a lotus, blazing in their energy. On seeing that energy, no one dared to marry her. On an auspicious day, having washed her hair and having fasted, she approached the gods and offered oblations into the fire, according to the prescribed rites and accompanied with recitations by brahmanas. When this was over, the goddess who was like Shri in her form, took the remaining flowers and went to her great-souled father. Bowing at her father's feet, she first offered the remnants to him. Then, joining her hands in salutation, the one with the beautiful hips stood by the side of the king. On seeing that his daughter had grown up and looked like a goddess, the king was unhappy that no one had wished to marry her yet.

'"The king said, 'O daughter! The time to give you away has arrived. But no one is asking me. Therefore, you yourself look for a husband, with qualities that are like your own. If you desire a man, tell me about him. Marry whom you wish. After deliberations, I will give you away. O fortunate one! I have heard what brahmanas have recited from the sacred texts. Listen to these words, as I recount them. "A father who does not give his daughter away is condemned. A husband who does not cohabit at the right time is condemned. A son, who does not protect his mother when her husband is dead, is condemned." On hearing my words, swiftly go and look for a husband. Act in a way so that we are not condemned by the gods.'"

'Markandeya said, "Thus addressing his daughter, he assigned aged ministers to her, for the arrangements, and asked her to go. Having learnt of her father's instructions, the intelligent one bowed bashfully at her father's feet and departed without any hesitation. She was seated on a golden chariot and was surrounded by the aged advisers. She went to the beautiful hermitages of the rajarshis. She showed her homage at the feet of the revered elders who were there. O son! She visited all the forests, one after another. At all the tirthas, the king's daughter gave away riches to the foremost among brahmanas and went from one region to another."'

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'Markandeya said, "O descendant of the Bharata lineage! On one occasion, Narada visited the king of Madra and was seated in the midst of the assembly hall, conversing

with him. At that time, after visiting all the tirthas and all the hermitages, Savitri, together with the ministers, returned to her father's abode. On seeing her father seated with Narada, the beautiful one lowered her head at their feet.

'"Narada asked, 'O king! Where did your daughter go and where has she returned from? Why do you not give this maiden away to a husband?'

'"Ashvapati replied, 'I sent her out on that task and she has returned now. O devarshi! Now hear from her whom she has chosen as a husband.'"

'Markandeya said, "The beautiful one was instructed by her father to recount everything in detail. She obeyed, and driven by destiny, spoke these words. 'There is a kshatriya king in the land of Shalva and he has dharma in his soul. He is famous by the name of Dyumatsena. Later, he became blind. The intelligent one lost his eyesight and his son was still young. Because of old enmity, a neighbour spotted the weakness and seized the kingdom. With his young son and wife, he left for the forest. Having left for the great forest, great in his vows, he performed austerities there. His son was born in the city, but grew up in the hermitage. His name is Satyavan and in my mind, I have accepted him as my husband.' Narada replied, 'O king! In her ignorance, Savitri has committed a grave error, by choosing the virtuous Satyavan. His father speaks the truth. His mother speaks the truth. Therefore, brahmanas gave him the name of Satyavan.[167] When he was young, he loved horses and fashioned them out of clay, painting them. He was therefore known as Chitrashva.'[168] The king asked, 'Is the king's son energetic and intelligent? Is he forgiving and brave? Is he truthful and devoted to his father?' Narada replied, 'He is as energetic as the sun-god and as intelligent as Brihaspati. He is as brave as the great Indra and as forgiving as the earth.' Ashvapati asked, 'Is the king's son, Satyavan, generous towards brahmanas? Is he handsome and large-hearted? Is his appearance pleasant?' Narada replied, 'According to his own ability, in generosity, he is the equal of Rantideva, the son of Samkriti.[169] In devotion to brahmanas and truthfulness, he is like Shibi, the son of Ushinara.[170] He is like Yayati in his generosity.[171] He is as pleasant to behold as the moon. Dyumatsena's powerful son is as handsome as one of the Ashvins. He is self-controlled, mild, brave, truthful and in control of his senses. He is friendly, without malice, modest and forbearing. To state it briefly, those who have grown old in austerities and conduct always say that he is established in uprightness and righteousness.' Ashvapati asked, 'O illustrious one! You have spoken to me about all his qualities. Now tell me about his faults, if he has any.' Narada replied, 'He has only one blemish. His life is short. One year from now, Satyavan will give up his body.'

'"The king said, 'O Savitri! O beautiful one! Go and choose another one as your husband. This is a great blemish that overshadows all his qualities. The illustrious Narada is worshipped by the gods and he has told me that his life is short. He will give

up his body within a year.'

'"Savitri said, 'The die is cast only once. The daughter is given away only once. "I give her away," is pronounced only once. All these three occur only once. Whether his life is long or short, whether he possesses qualities or is without qualities, I have chosen him as my husband once and will not choose a second one. Having made up my mind, I have voiced it in words. The act occurs thereafter. My mind has been made up.'

'"Narada said, 'O best of men! Your daughter Savitri's mind is firmly made up. It is impossible to dislodge her from the way of dharma. The qualities that Satyavan possesses do not exist in any other man. Therefore, it seems to me that your daughter should be given to him.'

'"The king said, 'O illustrious one! The words that you have spoken are true and should not be disregarded. O illustrious one! Since you are my preceptor, I will do as you say.'

'"Narada said, 'May your daughter Savitri be given away without any impediments. I will have to go away now. May all of you be fortunate.'"

'Markandeya said, "Having said this, Narada soared up into the sky and went to the region of the thirty gods. The king began to make arrangements for his daughter's marriage."'

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'Markandeya said, "The king reflected about the objectives behind the bestowal of his daughter and began to make all the arrangements for the marriage. On an auspicious lunar day, he invited all the brahmanas, all the officiating priests[172] and all the priests, and set out with his daughter. The king went to Dyumatsena's hermitage in the sacred forest, and accompanied by the brahmanas, approached the rajarshi on foot. He saw the immensely fortunate and blind king seated there, on a mat of kusha grass, under a shala tree. In accordance with what is prescribed, the king worshipped the rajarshi and introduced himself with a few restrained words. The king who was learned in dharma offered the king[173] an arghya,[174] a seat and a cow, and asked him why he had come. He[175] then told him everything about his wishes and intended course of action and about Satyavan. Ashvapati said, 'O rajarshi! This is my beautiful daughter, named Savitri. O one learned in dharma! In accordance with your own dharma, accept her as your daughter-in-law.' Dyumatsena replied, 'Dislodged from our kingdom, we have resorted to living in the woods. We are controlled and practise the dharma of ascetics. Your daughter does not deserve a state of living in the forest. How will she be able to bear that hardship?' Ashavapati said, 'Both My daughter and I know that happiness and unhappiness may exist or they may not exist.[176] Therefore, you should not utter such words to someone like me. O king! I have come here after making up my mind. I have

honoured you affectionately as a well-wisher and you should not kill my hopes. Since I have come here out of love, you should not refuse me. In this alliance, you are my equal and I am yours. Therefore, accept my daughter as your daughter-in-law and as Satyavan's wife.' Dyumatsena replied, 'Earlier, I had desired to have an alliance with you. But dislodged from my kingdom, I did not think about it again. Let my cherished desire be accomplished today itself. You are a guest that I have wished for.' Then the two kings summoned all the brahmanas who lived in the hermitage and in accordance with the rites, arranged for the wedding.

'"Having given his daughter away in the appropriate fashion,[177] with garments, Ashvapati happily returned to his own house. Having obtained a wife who possessed all the good qualities, Satyavan was delighted. She was also happy at having obtained the husband her heart had wanted. When her father had departed, she gave up all her ornaments. She donned bark and garments that were red.[178] Through her servitude, qualities, affection and self-control and attending to all the wishes, she satisfied everyone. By tending to her body and all her garments and other objects, she satisfied her mother-in-law. Through her restrained words and worship of the gods, she satisfied her father-in-law. In a similar way, through her pleasant words, skilfulness, equanimity and tending to him in private, she satisfied her husband. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Those virtuous ones lived in that hermitage for some time and performed austerities. But whether lying down or standing, during day and at night, in her mind, Savitri kept thinking about the words that Narada had spoken."'

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'Markandeya said, "O king! After a long period of many days had elapsed, the time of Satyavan's death arrived. Savitri counted every day that passed and Narada's words were always present in her heart. Having determined that his death would occur on the fourth day, for three nights, the beautiful one observed a vow of fasting and remained standing, day and night. Hearing about this difficult vow, the king was unhappy. He arose and consoled Savitri with these words. 'O daughter of a king! The vow that you have adopted is extremely severe. It is extremely difficult to remain standing for three nights.' Savitri replied, 'O father! Do not grieve over this act. I will complete the vow, which has been adopted with resolution. Resolution is the cause.'[179] Dyumatsena said, 'Under no circumstances can I ask you to give up your vow. Those like us should speak to you so that you complete it.' Having said this, the great-souled Dyumatsena refrained. Savitri remained standing, as if she had been made of wood. O bull among the Bharata lineage! Thinking that her husband would die the next day,[180] Savitri remained standing and the day passed in misery. 'Today is the day.' Thinking this, she offered oblations into the blazing fire. She performed her morning rites when the sun had arisen

four measures.[181] She bowed down before all the aged brahmanas and her mother-in-law and father-in-law, in due order, and restrained, stood standing before them with hands joined in salutation. For the sake of Savitri's welfare, all the residents of the hermitage and all the holy ascetics pronounced the benediction that she might never become a widow. Savitri, who was immersed in the yoga of meditation, wished in her mind that it might be this way and silently accepted the words of the ascetics. The king's daughter waited for the hour and the moment, thinking grievously about the words that Narada had spoken. O supreme among the Bharata lineage! The king's daughter was standing alone and her mother-in-law and father-in-law affectionately told her, 'You have perfectly completed the vow, as has been prescribed. It is now time to eat. After that, do whatever else remains to be done.' Savitri replied, 'I will eat when the sun has set and I have accomplished my desire. This is the resolution I have made in my mind about the time.' When Savitri was conversing in this way about food, Satyavan grasped an axe. He placed it over his shoulder and proceeded to leave for the forest.

'"Savitri told her husband, 'You should not go alone. I will go with you. I am disinclined to be separated from you.' Satyavan replied, 'O beautiful one! You have never gone to the forest earlier. The road is difficult. You are thin from the vow and fasting. How will you be able to walk?' Savitri said, 'I am not weak from the fasting and I do not feel exhausted. I have made up my mind to go. You should not restrain me.' Satyavan replied, 'Since you have made up your mind to go, I will do what you desire. But first take leave of the elders, so that sin does not touch me.' The one who was great in her vows went to her mother-in-law and father-in-law and said, 'My husband is going to the great forest to collect fruit as food. I seek arya's[182] and father-in-law's permission to go with him. I cannot bear to be separated from him. Your son is going for the sake of agnihotra and for his elders. He cannot be restrained. He could have been restrained had he gone to the forest for any other reason. I have not ventured out of the hermitage for almost a year. I have great curiosity to see the forest in bloom.' Dyumatsena replied, 'From the day Savitri's father gave her to me as a daughter-in-law, I do not remember her having ever requested me for anything. Let the daughter-in-law's desires be satisfied. O daughter! But along the way, see that Satyavan does not get distracted from his task.' With the permission of both, the famous one departed with her husband. She seemed to be laughing, but her heart was miserable. The large-eyed one saw colourful and beautiful woods in every direction, resounding with the cries of peacocks. Satyavan spoke these sweet words to Savitri. 'Behold these rivers full of sacred waters and these supreme trees in blossom.' The unblemished one always watched over her husband. Remembering the words of the sage, she thought that he was already dead. Walking gently, she followed her husband. Her heart was cleft in two and she waited for the time."'

'Markandeya said, "Accompanied by his wife, the valorous one collected fruit and filled his vessel. Then he began to chop the wood. While he was chopping the wood, he began to sweat. Because of his exertions, he developed an ache in his head. Overcome with exhaustion, he went to his beloved wife and spoke these words. 'I have developed an ache in my head because of these exertions. O Savitri! My limbs and my heart seem to be afflicted. O one whose words are restrained! I feel the signs that I am not well. I feel as if my head is being pierced with spikes. O fortunate one! I wish to sleep. I do not have the strength to stand.' At that, Savitri came up to her husband and embraced him. She sat down on the ground and placed his head on her lap. Remembering Narada's words, the ascetic one began to calculate the *muhurta*,[183] the kshana,[184] the hour and the day. In a short while, she saw a man who was attired in a yellow garment. He was crowned and handsome, with an energy that was like that of the sun. His complexion was smooth and dark and his eyes were red. With a noose in his hand, he looked terrible. He stood next to Satyavan and began to look at him.

'"On seeing him, she gently placed her husband's head on the ground and arose. With a trembling heart, she spoke miserably to him. 'From your superhuman appearance, I know that you are a god. O god! If it pleases you, tell me who you are and what you desire here.' Yama replied, 'O Savitri! You are devoted to your husband and have the power of austerities. It is for that reason that I will reply to you. O fortunate one! Know me to be Yama. The life of Satyavan, your husband and the son of a king, has run out. I will bind him and take him. That is my intention.' Having said this, in order to please her, the illustrious lord of the ancestors revealed everything about his wishes and said, 'This handsome one is an ocean of qualities and is united with dharma. That is the reason I have come myself and have not sent one of my servants to take him.' Then Yama forcibly took out from Satyavan's body a being that was as long as a thumb and binding him with the noose, controlled him. With the life being taken out, the body faded and lost its breath. The body became motionless and was unpleasant to behold. Binding him thus, Yama proceeded in a southern direction.[185]

'"Distressed, Savitri followed Yama. The immensely fortunate one was restrained in her vows and faithful to her husband. Yama said, 'O Savitri! Go back. Perform the last rites for your husband. Your debt to your husband has been discharged. You have come as far as you possibly can.' Savitri replied, 'I must go wherever my husband is going, of his own volition, or if he is being taken. That is the eternal dharma. Because of austerities, devotion to elders, love towards my husband, vows and your favours, nothing will be able to obstruct my path. The learned ones, enlightened about the truth, have said that friendship is established by walking seven steps with another.[186] Placing this friendship at the forefront, I will tell you something. Listen. Those who are not in control of their souls do not observe dharma, right abode and right endeavour, even

when they live in the forest. Those who are learned about dharma, extol it. Therefore, the learned say that dharma is the most important. By following the single dharma identified by the learned, we attain all the different paths. I do not wish for a second or a third mode. Hence, the learned have said that dharma is the most important.' Yama said, 'Go back. I am delighted with the words you have spoken. They have the right vowels and consonants and are full of reason. Ask for a boon, other than his life. O unblemished one! I will grant you any boon that you desire.' Savitri replied, 'My father-in-law has been dislodged from his kingdom and dwells in the forest. His eyes have been destroyed and he is in a hermitage. Through your favours, let the king regain his sight and become strong, resplendent like the sun and the fire.' Yama said, 'O unblemished one! I will grant you those boons, exactly as you have asked. I notice that you are tired from the journey. Refrain and go back. Otherwise, you will become exhausted.' Savitri replied, 'How can there be exhaustion when I am with my husband? I must certainly follow the path that my husband takes. I must go where my husband is being taken. O lord of the gods! Listen again to my words. It is said that a meeting with the virtuous is desirable. It is said that friendship with them is even better. Communion with the virtuous is never fruitless. Therefore, one should always associate with the virtuous.' Yama said, 'The words spoken by you are favourable and extend the intelligence of the intelligent. Your words ensure welfare. O beautiful one! Other than Satyavan becoming alive, ask for a second boon.' Savitri replied, 'My wise father-in-law has been robbed of his own kingdom earlier. May the king get it back. May that elder of mine never stray from his own dharma. That is the second boon that I ask from you.' Yama said, 'He will soon obtain his own kingdom back. The king will never deviate from his own dharma. O daughter of a king! Your desire has now been satisfied. Refrain and go back. Otherwise, you will become exhausted.' Savitri replied, 'You control all the beings through your rules. You follow the rules, and not your own caprices. Therefore, you are famous as the god Yama.[187] Now listen again to my words. The eternal dharma of the righteous is non-violence towards all beings in deeds, thoughts and words and kindness and benevolence. In this world, men are usually kind only up to their capacity. The righteous exhibit compassion even when their ill-wishers arrive.' Yama said, 'Your words are as satisfying as water to one who is thirsty. O beautiful one! Other than Satyavan's life, ask again for any boon that you desire.' Savitri replied, 'My father, the king, is without any sons. Let my father have a hundred sons as my brothers. Let them extend his lineage. That is the third boon that I crave from you.' Yama said, 'O beautiful one! Your father will have a hundred radiant sons who will extend the lineage. O daughter of a king! Your desire has now been satisfied. Return. You have come too far along the road.' Savitri replied, 'Since I am with my husband, it has not seemed like a long distance to me. My mind travels a greater distance. As you travel, listen to my words. Listen again to the words that I will speak. You are Vivasvat's powerful son.[188] The

wise therefore call you Vaivasvata. You please and control all beings through dharma. O lord! That is the reason you are the king of dharma. One does not trust oneself as much as one trusts the virtuous. Therefore, people are especially affectionate towards those who are virtuous. Friendship towards all beings engenders trust. That is the reason people are especially trustful towards those who are virtuous.'

'"Yama said, 'O beautiful one! O fortunate one! I have never heard words, from anyone else, like the ones that you have spoken. I am extremely pleased. Other than his life, ask for a fourth boon. And then, go.' Savitri replied, 'Let me have one hundred strong, brave and righteous sons through Satyavan's loins, so that they please us and extend the lineage. This is the fourth boon that I choose from you.' Yama said, 'O beautiful one! You will have one hundred strong, brave and righteous sons and they will please you. O daughter of a king! Do not get exhausted. Return. You have come too far along the path.' Savitri replied, 'The virtuous are always devoted to dharma. The virtuous do not tremble. Nor do they suffer. A union between the pious and the virtuous is always fruitful. The virtuous do not have any fear from the virtuous. The virtuous make the sun move through their truth. Through their austerities, the virtuous bear up the earth. O king! The virtuous determine the past and the future. The virtuous have no lassitude when they are in the midst of the virtuous. This is known to be the eternal conduct practised by aryas. The virtuous work for each other, without any expectations. Favours done by virtuous men are never fruitless. They do not destroy the objective, or honour. Since the virtuous always display such conduct, the virtuous are always the protectors.' Yama said, 'The more you speak, the more your words are full of dharma, pleasant to the mind, well articulated and full of deep meaning. O excellent one! The more am I inclined towards respecting you. O one controlled in vows! Ask for an unmatched boon.' Savitri replied, 'O one who gives respect! You have not made an exception to your favours, as you did with the other boons.[189] Therefore, I ask for the boon that Satyavan should live. Without my husband, I am like one who is dead. Without my husband, I do not desire any happiness. Without my husband, I do not desire heaven. Without my husband, I do not desire prosperity. Without my husband, I do not desire life. You have granted me the boon that I will have one hundred sons. Despite that, you are taking my husband away. I ask for the boon that Satyavan should live. It is then that your words will come true.' Then Vaivasvata Dharmaraja Yama agreed to this and freed the noose. He cheerfully told Savitri, 'O fortunate one! O one who delights your lineage! Look. I have freed your husband. Take him with you. He is free from disease and will be successful in his objectives. Together with you, he will live for four hundred years. Through his rites, sacrifices and dharma, he will attain fame in the world. Satyavan will beget one hundred sons on you. All of those kshatriyas will be kings, together with their sons and grandsons. Your names will be eternally famous on earth. Your father will beget a hundred sons on your mother Malavi. Their sons and

grandsons will be eternally famous as the Malavas. Like your kshatriya brothers, they will be the equals of the thirty gods.' Having bestowed those boons on her, the powerful Dharmaraja made Savitri return and left for his own abode.

'"When Yama had left, having obtained her husband back, Savitri returned to the spot where her husband's corpse was lying. On seeing her husband lying down on the ground, she approached him and embraced him. She sat down on the ground and raised his head onto her lap. Having regained his consciousness, he repeatedly looked at her with great love, as if having returned from a journey. Satyavan told Savitri, 'I have slept for a long time. Why did you not wake me up? Where is the dark-complexioned man who was dragging me away?' Savitri replied, 'O bull among men! You have indeed slept for a long time on my lap. The illustrious god Yama, the controller of all beings, has departed. O immensely fortunate one! O son of a king! You are rested and have awoken from sleep. If you can, arise. Look. The night is now deep.' Having regained consciousness, Satyavan arose, as if from pleasant slumber. Glancing at the woods in all the directions, Satyavan said, 'O slender-waisted one! I set out with you, to gather fruits as food. Then, as I was chopping wood, I suffered from a headache. Tormented by the pain in my head, I could no longer stand up and lay down on your lap and slept. O beautiful one! I remember all this. In your embrace, sleep overcame my mind. I then saw a terrible and dark being, with great energy. O slender-waisted one! If you know, tell me if that was a dream. Or was it reality?' At that, Savitri told him, 'O son of a king! The night is deepening. Tomorrow, I will tell you everything, exactly as it happened. O fortunate one! Arise. Arise. O one good in your vows. See your parents. The night is deep now and the sun has gone down. The ones who wander around in the night are happily roaming around, with harsh voices. The sounds of leaves can he heard, as animals roam around in the forest. Stationing themselves in the south-west direction, jackals are howling terribly. They are making my heart tremble.' Satyavan said, 'The forest is covered with a terrible darkness and looks fearsome. Therefore, you will not be able to determine the path that we should follow.' Savitri replied, 'The forest has been burnt down. There is a dry tree that is still blazing. The flames fanned by the wind can be seen here and there. Bringing some fire from there, I will light a fire in all the directions. There is plenty of wood here. So remove all anxiety from your heart. I can see that your head is aching. You will not be able to determine the path in this forest enveloped in darkness. If you are unable to go, with your permission, we will go tomorrow morning, when the forest is visible. O unblemished one! If it so pleases you, we will spend the night here.'

'"Satyavan said, 'My headache has gone and I can see that my limbs are fine. If it pleases you, I wish to go and see my mother and my father. Earlier, I have never returned to the hermitage at the wrong time. My mother restricts me, even before evening has set in. My elders are anxious, even when I go out during the day. With all

the other residents of the hermitage, my father will be looking for me. On several occasions before this, my mother and father have been unhappy and have rebuked me, saying that I have been out too long. Thinking about me, I wonder about the state they will be in now. On not seeing me, they must be sorely afflicted. One night, some time ago, the aged ones were extremely miserable on my account. With great love, they told me in a flood of tears, "O son! Without you, we cannot be alive for an instant. O son! We can certainly bear life as long as you are alive. You are the crutch for these aged and blind ones. Our lineage is based in you. Our funeral oblations, our fame and our offspring are established in you." My mother is old. My father is old. I am their crutch. What state will they be reduced to, if they do not see me tonight? I blame that sleep. It is responsible for my father and my mother being anxious on my account, fearing harm and that I am in danger and a calamity confronts me. I have no interest in living without my mother and my father. I am sure that my blind father, who has the sight of wisdom, is anxious and despondent. He is asking all the residents of the hermitage about me. O beautiful one! I am not sorrowing on account of my own self. I am thinking about my father and my weak mother, who is devoted to him. They will now be in supreme distress because of me. I will live if they live, and they must be supported by me. I know that I must only perform tasks that bring them pleasure.' Having said this, the one with dharma in his soul, devoted to his elders and loved by his elders, raised his arms in grief and began to lament loudly. Savitri followed the course of dharma. On seeing that her husband was overcome with grief after speaking in this way, she wiped the tears from his eyes and said, 'If I have observed austerities, if I have offered oblations, this night will be safe for my mother-in-law, my father-in-law and my husband. I do not remember having spoken a falsehood, even in jest. By virtue of that truth, let my parents-in-law remain alive today.' Satyavan said, 'O Savitri! I wish to see my parents. Let us start, without any delay. O one with the beautiful hips! If I see that something unpleasant has happened to my mother and my father, I swear truthfully that I will no longer be alive. If your intelligence is devoted to dharma, if you wish to see me alive, if you wish to do that which ensures my pleasure, let us return to the hermitage.' Then the beautiful Savitri arose and tidied her hair. She grasped her husband by the arms and made him arise. Having arisen, Satyavan wiped his limbs with his hand.

'"He looked in all the directions and saw his vessel.[190] Savitri told him, 'Collect fruit tomorrow. I will carry the axe, for the sake of obtaining that which you want.' She hung the vessel from the branch of a tree. Grasping the axe, she returned to her husband. The one with the beautiful thighs then placed her husband's left hand on her shoulder. Embracing him with her right hand, the one whose gait was gentle, began to walk. Satyavan said, 'O timid one! I come here often and the paths are known to me. Besides, through the moonlight shining between the trees, I can make out. O beautiful one! Without any hesitation, walk along the path we came by in the morning, to gather fruit.

The road branches into two near that palasha clump. Swiftly follow the path that heads in a northern direction. I am well. I am strong. I wish to see my parents.' Having said this, he quickly proceeded towards the hermitage."'

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'Markandeya said, "Meanwhile, the immensely strong Dyumatsena had regained his eyesight. He was happy in his heart and could see everything. O bull among men! He went to all the hermitages with his wife Shaibya and was extremely afflicted because of his son. The couple of them went to all the hermitages, rivers, forests and lakes and searched in all those regions. They looked up whenever they heard a sound, thinking that it was their son and rushed there, saying, 'Satyavan is coming with Savitri.' Their feet became split and rough, wounded, bleeding and pierced. Their limbs were sore from kusha grass and thorns. They ran around, as if mad. All the brahmanas who lived in the hermitages came to them, comforting and surrounding them. They brought them back to their own hermitage. There, the aged ones rich in austerities surrounded him, together with his wife. They comforted him, recounting wonderful tales about former kings. The aged ones, desirous of seeing their son, were comforted. But they remembered accounts of their son when he was young and were extremely miserable.

'"Oppressed by grief, they again began to lament in piteous tones and weep. 'Alas, son! Alas, faithful daughter-in-law! Where are you? Where are you?' Suvarcha said, 'Satyavan must be alive. His wife Savitri has austerities, self-control and conduct.' Goutama said, 'I have studied the Vedas, together with their branches, and I have accumulated great austerities. I have practised brahmacharya when young. I have satisfied my superiors and the fire. With self-control, I have observed all the vows. I have lived on the wind and have fasted. I have done everything that ensures welfare. Because of those austerities, I know everything that has been intended. Know this to be the truth. Satyavan is alive.' The disciple[191] said, 'The words that have emerged from the mouth of my preceptor can never be false. Therefore, Satyavan must be alive.' The rishis said, 'Savitri is a wife who bears all the auspicious marks. She has no signs of widowhood. Therefore, Satyavan must be alive.' Bharadvaja said, 'His wife Savitri is endowed with austerities, self-control and conduct. Therefore, Satyavan must be alive.' Dalbhya said, 'Since you have regained your eyesight and since Savitri completed her vow without partaking of food, Satyavan must be alive.' Mandavya said, 'From the way animals and birds are speaking in the tranquil directions and from the way you conduct yourself as a king, Satyavan must be alive.' Dhoumya said, 'Your son is loved by the people and has all the qualities. He has all the signs of a long life. Satyavan must be alive.' Thus comforted by those truthful and eloquent ascetics and reflecting about what they had said, he[192] remained there.

'"In a short while, Savitri, accompanied by her husband Satyavan, returned to the

hermitage in the night and entered it cheerfully. The brahmanas said, 'O lord of the earth! We have seen you reunited with your son. You have regained your eyesight. The reunion with your son, the sight of Savitri and the regaining of your eyesight—these three blessings will extend your prosperity. It will certainly happen as we have said. We are repeatedly saying that you will swiftly extend in prosperity.' O Partha! All the brahmanas then kindled a fire and took their seats around King Dyumatsena. Shaibya, Satyavan and Savitri were standing to one side. But with the permission of everyone, they happily seated themselves. O Partha! Then all the residents of the forest, who were seated with the king, were driven by curiosity and asked the king's son, 'O illustrious one! Why did you not return home with your wife earlier? Why have you returned so late in the night? What obstacle stood in the way? O son of a king! Your father and mother were tormented and so were we. There must have been a reason for this. Therefore, tell us everything.' Satyavan replied, 'With my father's permission, I went out with Savitri. When chopping down wood in the forest, my head started to ache. I know that, afflicted with pain, I slept for a long time. Never before have I slept for such a long time. Thinking that all of you might be tormented on my account, I returned so late in the night. That is the reason and there is no other.' Goutama said, 'Your father Dyumatsena's eyesight was restored suddenly. You do not know the reason for that. Therefore, Savitri must speak. O Savitri! We wish to hear. You know the entire truth. I know you Savitri. You are like Savitri[193] in your energy. You know the reason behind everything. Therefore, speak the truth. If there is nothing that is a secret from you, tell us everything.'

'"Savitri said, 'It is exactly the way you know it to be. There is nothing that is beyond your thoughts. There is nothing that is a secret from me. Therefore, hear the truth. The great-souled Narada had foretold the death of my husband. Since today was the appointed time, I did not leave his side. When he fell asleep, Yama himself arrived with his attendants. Having bound him, he headed in the direction inhabited by the ancestors. I then began to satisfy the illustrious god with truthful words. He granted me five boons and listen to what they were. I obtained two boons for my father-in-law, the return of his eyesight and his kingdom. I obtained a hundred sons for my father and a hundred sons for myself. My husband Satyavan obtained a life of four hundred years. I steadfastly observed the vow for the sake of my husband's life. I have now described to you all the reasons in detail, exactly as they occurred and how that great misery of mine has ended in happiness.'

'"The rishis said, 'The king's lineage was immersed in calamity, in a pond full of darkness. O virtuous one! You are of good conduct. You have borne up the sacred dharma. You were born in a noble lineage and you have raised it up again.'"

'Markandeya said, "The assembled rishis honoured and praised that best of women. They took their leave of that Indra among kings and his son. Then they returned to their

own abodes through auspicious routes."'

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'Markandeya said, "The night ended. The sun's disc arose. Having performed their morning rites, all the ones rich in austerities reassembled. The maharshis did not tire of recounting repeatedly to Dyumatsena everything about Savitri's great glory. O king! Then all the subjects arrived from the land of Shalva and told the king about how his enemy had been slain by his own adviser. On learning that he had been killed by his minister, with his aides and well-wishers, they came and recounted everything that had happened. The soldiers of the enemy had run away. In unison, all the subjects had decided that he[194] should be their king. Irrespective of whether he possessed sight or did not have eyesight, he should be the king. They said that they had been dispatched to the king because of this decision. The vehicles had come and so had the four kinds of forces.[195] Therefore, now that his victory had been proclaimed in the city, they asked the fortunate king to leave, so that he might occupy the seat of his father and grandfathers for many nights. On seeing that the king now had sight and was healthy, all of them bowed their heads in subjugation, their eyes dilated with wonder.

'"The king then greeted all the aged brahmanas who lived in the hermitage. All of them honoured him and he left for the city. Shaibya left, in Savitri's company. They were in a decorated and radiant palanquin that was pulled by men and was surrounded by soldiers. The priests happily instated Dyumatsena and instated his great-souled son as the heir apparent.[196] Over a long period of time, Savitri gave birth to a hundred sons. They were brave, never retreated from battle and extended her fame. She also had one hundred extremely powerful brothers. They were begotten by Ashvapati, king of the Madras, on Malavi. Thus Savitri saved all of them from the misfortune that had arisen—herself, her father, her mother, her mother-in-law, her father-in-law, her husband and the entire lineage. In that fashion, the fortunate Droupadi, honoured because of her good conduct, will deliver all of you, like Savitri, born from a noble lineage."'

Vaishampayana said, 'O king! Thus instructed by that great-souled one,[197] the Pandavas lost their sorrow and their fever and continued to live in Kamyaka.'

Section Forty-Three

Kundala-aharana Parva

This parva has 294 shlokas and eleven chapters.

Chapter 581(284): 39 shlokas
Chapter 582(285): 17 shlokas
Chapter 583(286): 20 shlokas
Chapter 584(287): 29 shlokas
Chapter 585(288): 19 shlokas
Chapter 586(289): 23 shlokas
Chapter 587(290): 26 shlokas
Chapter 588(291): 28 shlokas
Chapter 589(292): 27 shlokas
Chapter 590(293): 23 shlokas
Chapter 591(294): 43 shlokas

Kundala *is an earring and Karna was naturally born with kundalas.* Aharana *means seizing or taking. Pritha (Kunti) serves Durvasa and obtains a boon. Through this, she invokes Surya and Karna is born. When she abandons Karna, he is adopted and raised by a charioteer. Karna is born with natural armour and earrings that make him invincible. Indra asks for these, and in return, gives Karna an invincible spear.*

581(284)

Janamejaya asked, 'O great brahmana! When Lomasha conveyed Indra's message to Pandu's son, Yudhishthira, he spoke these words. "When Savyasachi has gone from here,[1] I will remove the terrible fear that you do not talk about." O foremost among learned ones! What was that great fear concerning Karna? Why did the great-souled one[2] not talk about it to anyone?'

Vaishampayana said, 'O tiger among kings! Since you have asked, I will tell you about it. O best of the Bharata lineage! Listen to my words. When twelve years were over and the thirteenth year had started, Shakra wished to ensure the welfare of the Pandavas and went begging to Karna. O great king! But learning about the intentions of the great Indra concerning the earrings, Vibhavasu Surya went to Karna.[3] The brave and truthful one, devoted to brahmanas, was lying down on an expensive bed that was covered with admirable spreads. O Indra among kings! The one with the rays showed himself in the night, at the end of a dream. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! He was driven by great compassion and love for his son. Through his powers of yoga, Surya assumed the form of a handsome brahmana, learned in the Vedas. For the sake of Karna's welfare, he spoke these comforting words to him. "O Karna! O son! O foremost among those who speak the truth! Listen to my words. O mighty-armed one! Out of

affection towards you, I will now speak words that are for your welfare. O Karna! To ensure the welfare of the Pandavas, Shakra will approach you in the form of a brahmana, so that he can take away your earrings. It is known in the entire world that your conduct is such that when righteous ones beg you for something, you give and do not wish anything in return. O son! You give to brahmanas whatever riches and other things they ask for. You do not refuse. Knowing this to be the case, the chastiser of Paka[4] will arrive himself. He will beg you for your earrings and armour.[5] When he asks for the earrings, you must not give them to him. Entreat him as best as you can, because that will ensure your supreme welfare. O son! When he talks to you about the earrings, you must again and again refuse him by citing many different kinds of reasons. Offer him other riches. Appease Purandara, who desires the earrings, through gems, women, objects of desire, riches of different kinds and by citing examples. O Karna! If you give away the beautiful earrings that you were naturally born with, your life will be shortened and you will come under the power of death. O one who is reverent! Arrayed in your armour and earrings, you cannot be slain by your enemies in battle. Remember these words. These two treasures arose from amrita. O Karna! If you desire to live, they must therefore be carefully protected by you." Karna asked, "Who are you, who have shown yourself to me as my supreme well-wisher? O illustrious one! If you wish, tell me who you are, dressed in the attire of a brahmana." The brahmana said, "O son! I am the one with the thousand rays. I have given you this advice as your well-wisher. Act in accordance with my words. That will be supremely beneficial for you."

'Karna said, "It is certainly in my best interests that the illustrious lord of the cows[6] is speaking to me today for my welfare. Listen to my words. O granter of boons! I am propitiating you and am speaking these words to you out of affection. If I am dear to you, you should not restrain me from observing this vow. O Vibhavasu! The entire world knows about this vow of mine. It is certain that I will give my life away to the foremost among brahmanas. O supreme among those who travel the skies! O foremost among the gods! If Shakra comes to me in the disguise of a brahmana and begs my excellent earrings and armour for the welfare of the sons of Pandu, I will give them to him. Then my deeds, famous in the three worlds, will not be destroyed. For those like us, ill fame, even if it saves one's life, is not appropriate. A glorious death that is approved of by the world is appropriate. Therefore, I will give the earrings, together with the armour, to Indra. If the slayer of Bala and Vritra[7] comes to me and begs for the earrings to ensure the welfare of the sons of Pandu, it will extend my fame in the world and increase his ill fame. O radiant one! Even at the expense of my life, I desire for fame in this world. The famous one attains heaven. The one with ill fame is destroyed. Like a mother, fame ensures the life of a man in this world. Even if the body is alive, ill fame destroys life. O Vibhavasu! O lord of the world! The creator himself has recited an ancient shloka about how fame is life itself. 'In the next world, fame ensures the supreme objective for a man.

In this world, pure fame extends a man's life.' By giving away these objects that are natural to my body, I will obtain eternal fame, by giving them as gifts to brahmanas in accordance with the prescribed rites. By offering my body in battle, by performing this difficult deed and by vanquishing my enemies, I will obtain nothing but fame. O destroyer of Svarbhanu![8] By offering protection to those who are terrified in battle and seek to save their lives, by freeing the aged, the young and brahmanas from great danger, I will obtain supreme fame in this world. Know that my vow is to protect fame, even at the expense of my life. O god! By giving this supreme gift to Maghavan, in the disguise of a brahmana, I will traverse along the supreme path in this world."'

582(285)

'Surya said, "O Karna! Do not act against your own interests, or those of your well-wishers, sons, wives, mother and father. O supreme among those who live! Seek to obtain fame in this world and continued fame in heaven without sacrificing your life. There is no doubt that the eternal fame that you wish for, will disappear, if it is at the cost of your own life. O bull among men! In this world, as long as one is alive, one can perform tasks for the father, the mother, the sons and other relatives. O tiger among men! Learn from me that kings perform virile deeds the same way. O immensely radiant one! Men have fame when they are alive. When the body has been reduced to ashes, what use does fame serve one who is dead? It is not the dead, but living ones that know fame. The fame of a dead human is like a garland on one who has lost his life. It is because you are devoted to me that I am telling you this for the sake of your own welfare. This is for the reason that all my devotees should be protected by me. O mighty-armed one! I know that this one here is my greatest devotee and is devoted towards me. Therefore, act in accordance with my words. There is something supreme in you, created by a god. It is because of this that I am addressing you in this way and act without hesitation. O bull among men! This is a secret even to the gods and you cannot know this. Therefore, I cannot recount this secret to you. In due course of time, you will know it. O Radheya![9] I am telling you this again. Listen to my words. When the wielder of the vajra begs for the earrings, you should not give them to him. O immensely radiant one! With your beautiful earrings, you will be as resplendent as the azure moon in the sky, in the midst of the two Vishakhas.[10] Know that fame is useful to a man as long as he is alive. O son! Therefore, you should refuse Purandara when he comes for the earrings. O unblemished one! You will be able to repulse the desire of the king of the gods for the earrings with many kinds of words and by citing reasons again and again. O Karna! Use sweetly adorned words to repulse Purandara's design, reinforced by intelligent arguments. O tiger among men! You are Savyasachi's challenger. And Savyasachi, brave in battle, is your challenger. As long as you possess the beautiful earrings, Arjuna

cannot vanquish you in battle, even if Indra himself becomes his arrows. O Karna! Therefore, if you desire to defeat Arjuna in combat, do not give your beautiful earrings to Shakra."'

583(286)

'Karna said, "O illustrious one! O lord of the cows! O one with the extremely fierce rays! You know that there is no other god to whom I am as devoted as to you. O lord of the cows! My affection towards you has always been greater than that towards my wife, my sons, my own self and my well-wishers. O one who spreads light! You know that there is no doubt that great-souled ones desire to return the love and devotion of their devotees and worshippers. Since your illustrious self knows that Karna loves you like no other god in heaven, you have spoken about my welfare. I repeatedly bow my head before you and seek your favours again and again. O one with the sharp rays! I am telling you this. Please pardon me. I am not frightened of death as much as I am of falsehood. Especially for all the brahmanas and all the righteous ones, I am ready to give up my life, without any hesitation. O god! O one who spreads light! In so far as the words about Pandava Phalguna are concerned, remove all torment and misery from your mind. Concerning Arjuna and me, I will vanquish Arjuna in battle. O god! You know about the great strength of weapons I have obtained from Jamadagni's son[11] and from the great-souled Drona. O foremost among the gods! Grant me permission to observe my vow. If the wielder of the vajra comes and begs for my own life, I will give it to him."

'Surya replied, "O son! O immensely strong one! If you wish to give your beautiful earrings to the wielder of the vajra, you should speak to him so that your victory is ensured. Because of your rule, you will have to give your earrings to Shatakratu. But as long as the earrings adorn you, you cannot be slain by any beings. O son! Therefore, the slayer of the danavas[12] wishes to ensure your destruction at the hands of Arjuna in battle and seeks to rob your earrings. With good and true words, you should propitiate Purandara, lord of the gods, who never deviates from his objective, again and again and tell him, 'O one with the thousand eyes! I will give you my earrings and my excellent armour if you give me an invincible spear[13] that will destroy all my enemies.' O Karna! It is only under this rule that you should give Shakra your earrings. With the spear, you will be able to kill your enemies in battle. O mighty-armed one! The spear of the king of the gods is such that, without killing hundreds and thousands of enemies, it does not return to the hand."'

Vaishampayana said, 'Saying this, the one with the thousand rays suddenly disappeared. After he had meditated, Karna told Surya about his dream.[14] Vrisha[15] then recounted to him everything in detail, all that he had witnessed and the conversation that had taken place between them in the night. On hearing this, the

illustrious god Surya Bhanu, the destroyer of Svarbhanu, smiled and told Karna that this was all true. On knowing this to be true, Radheya, the destroyer of enemy warriors, waited for Vasava's arrival, hoping to obtain the spear.'

584(287)

Janamejaya asked, 'What was the secret that the one with the strong rays did not tell Karna? What were the earrings like? What was the armour like? O excellent one! Where did the earrings and the armour come from? O one rich in austerities! I wish to hear all this. Tell me.'

Vaishampayana said, 'O king! I will tell you about Vibhavasu's secret, about what the earrings were like and about what the armour was like. O king! In earlier times, a brahmana presented himself before Kuntibhoja.[16] He was terrible in energy and extremely tall. He had a beard and matted hair and held a staff in his hand. He was agreeable to look at and his limbs were flawless. He seemed to be ablaze in his energy. His complexion was the colour of honey and he was sweet in his speech. He adorned himself with austerities and studying.

'The immensely ascetic one told King Kuntibhoja, "Without being refused, I wish to beg for a meal in your house. O unblemished one! If you so desire, I will dwell in your house, provided that you or your followers do not cross me in any way. I will come and go as I desire. O king! No one should insult me about my bed or my seat." Kuntibhoja replied to him in pleasant words. "It shall be that way, and more than that." He told him again, "O great brahmana! My daughter, by the name of Pritha, is famous. That beautiful one has good conduct and is virtuous. She is self-controlled and honourable. She will wait on you and worship you, without showing you disrespect. You will be satisfied with her conduct and virtue." Having spoken in this way and having worshipped the brahmana in accordance with the prescribed rites, he spoke to his daughter Pritha, whose eyes were wide with wonder when she arrived. "O daughter! This immensely fortunate brahmana wishes to reside here. I have promised him that he can live in my house. O daughter! I have confidently told him that you know how to satisfy a brahmana. Act in a way so that my words are not falsified. The illustrious brahmana is an ascetic and is devoted to studying. Whatever the immensely ascetic one asks for, should be given without any hesitation. Brahmanas are supreme energy. Brahmanas are supreme austerities. It is because of the worship of brahmanas that the sun shines in the sky. Disrespecting those who deserve to be honoured, the great asura Vatapi and Talajangha were killed through the curse of a brahmana.[17] O daughter! A great burden is being placed on you. With self-control, always seek to satisfy the brahmana. O one who increases my joy! I know that from childhood, you have been attentive to brahmanas, all the elders, all the servants, friends, kin, mothers and me

myself, in the appropriate way and with due honour. O one with the flawless limbs! There is no one among the subjects, in the city, in the inner quarters or among the servants, who is dissatisfied with you. I therefore think that you can handle this brahmana, who is prone to anger. O Pritha! You became my daughter in your childhood. You were born in the lineage of the Vrishnis and are Shura's beloved daughter. Earlier, when you were still a child, your father affectionately handed you over to me.[18] You are Vasudeva's sister and the foremost among my daughters. You became my daughter because he[19] promised his firstborn child to me. You were born in such a lineage and raised in such a lineage. You have moved from one kind of happiness to another kind of happiness. You are like a lotus that has moved from one pond to another. O beautiful one! Those who are born in low lineages, even if they are kept under check when they are children, often become deviants later. O Pritha! You have been born in the lineage of a king and possess extraordinary beauty. O beautiful one! You have all the qualities. O beautiful one! Discard your pride, insolence and vanity. O Pritha! Worship the brahmana, the granter of boons. That will ensure your welfare. O fortunate one! O unblemished one! Through this, you are certain to obtain good fortune. But if you anger the foremost among brahmanas, he will burn down my entire lineage."'

585(288)

'Kunti said, "O king! I will restrain myself and honour and worship the brahmana, just as you have promised. O Indra among kings! I do not lie. It is my nature to worship brahmanas. The performance of a pleasant task for you is my supreme bliss. Whether the illustrious one arrives in the evening, the morning, at night or in the middle of the night, he will not be angry with me. O Indra among kings! O supreme among men! The worship of brahmanas is for my own gain. I will follow your instructions and do that which ensures welfare. O Indra among kings! Be assured that the foremost among brahmanas will not be slighted while he resides in your house. I am telling you this truthfully. O unblemished one! I will pay particular attention towards what is pleasing to the brahmana and ensures your welfare. O king! Therefore, banish all fever from your mind. O lord of the earth! The brahmanas are immensely fortunate. When worshipped, they are capable of saving. When it is the opposite, they can kill. I have this knowledge and I will satisfy the foremost among brahmanas. O king! You will not suffer grief from that excellent of brahmanas on my account. O Indra among kings! When brahmanas are disrespected, they can cause the downfall of kings, like Chyavana, because of Sukanya's deeds in earlier times.[20] O Indra among men! Just as you have instructed and told the brahmana, I will serve that best of brahmanas with all restraint."

'The king said, "O fortunate one! O daughter! For my sake, for my welfare, for the welfare of the lineage and for your own sake, you must act in this way, without any

hesitation."'

Vaishampayana said, 'Having said this, the immensely famous Kuntibhoja, devoted towards his children, handed over his daughter Pritha to the brahmana, saying, "O brahmana! This is my young daughter. She has been brought up in comfort. Do not take it to heart if she commits an act that is wrong. Immensely fortunate brahmanas are usually not angry towards the aged, the young and ascetics, even if the transgression is regular. Brahmanas should forgive even a great transgression. O foremost among brahmanas! Therefore, accept the homage that she renders to the best of her ability." The brahmana said that it would be this way. In a happy frame of mind, the king gave him a house that was as white as a swan or a beam of the moon. He arranged for a radiant seat in the place where the fire was maintained. He also gave him food and every other object. The princess cast aside her laziness and pride. With great effort, she devoted herself to worshipping and serving the brahmana. Pritha concentrated on purification and went to the brahmana. She served and satisfied him in the appropriate way, as if he were a god.'

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Vaishampayana said, 'O great king! The maiden, good in her vows, tended to the brahmana, rigid in his vows. She satisfied him, with a pure mind. O Indra among kings! The foremost among brahmanas sometimes said that he would return in the morning, but would return in the evening or at night. But at all hours, and always, the maiden worshipped him with food and shelter and gave him more and more. Day by day, her hospitality about food, other objects, beds and seats, increased and never decreased. O king! Even if the brahmana censured her, found fault with her or spoke unpleasant words, Pritha never did anything that displeased him. On several occasions, the brahmana returned when the time had passed, or did not return at all. He asked her to serve food when it was difficult to obtain. But she always said that everything was ready and served him. She was self-restrained, like a disciple, a son or a sister. O Indra among kings! That unblemished gem of a maiden created affection in that foremost among brahmanas, tending to his wishes. The supreme among brahmanas was satisfied with her character and conduct and with her many supreme efforts, she continued to serve him. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Her father used to ask her in the morning and the evening. "O daughter! Is the brahmana satisfied with your service?" The famous one would reply that he was supremely satisfied. The great-souled Kuntibhoja felt great joy.

'When one year had passed, the foremost among those who meditate had detected no misdeeds on Pritha's part and had become her well-wisher. Delighted, the brahmana told her, "O fortunate one! O beautiful one! I am completely satisfied with your service. O fortunate one! Ask for a boon that is difficult for humans to obtain, so that you are able to surpass all women in your fame." Kunti replied, "O foremost among those who are

learned in the Vedas! All my desires have already been satisfied, since you and my father are pleased with me. O brahmana! What purpose will boons serve me?" The brahmana said, "O fortunate one! O one with the sweet smiles! If you do not wish for a boon from me, accept this mantra. Through it, you can summon the gods. O fortunate one! Whichever god you invoke through this mantra will be under your control. Whether willing or unwilling, the god will be under your control, pacified by the mantra, and will be like your servant." O king! The unblemished one wasn't capable of refusing a second time. She was scared that the foremost among brahmanas might curse her. O king! The brahmana instructed the one with the flawless limbs about the sequence of mantras, located towards the beginning of the sacred Atharva texts.[21] O Indra among kings! Having thus bestowed it, he told Kuntibhoja, "O king! I have lived happily in your house, satisfied by your daughter. She has always pleased me and honoured me. It is over." Having said this, he disappeared. The king was overcome with wonder at seeing the brahmana vanish on the spot. He honoured Pritha.'

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Vaishampayana said, 'When that foremost among brahmanas had departed and some time had passed, the maiden began to think about the strength and weakness of that sequence of mantras. "What is this sequence of mantras that the great-souled one has given me? I will soon find out its strength." While thinking in this fashion, the young girl noticed that with puberty, her menses had arrived and she was ashamed. Pritha saw that the one with the thousand rays was blazing. On seeing the beauty of Bhanu in the morning, she was not satisfied. She became gifted with divine eyesight and she saw the god whose form was celestial, clad in armour and adorned with earrings. O lord of men! She became curious about the mantra. The beautiful one invoked the god. Having performed pranayama, she summoned the sun-god. O king! The sun-god swiftly appeared before her. His complexion was as yellow as honey. He was mighty-armed. His neck was like a conch shell. He seemed to be smiling. He wore bracelets on his upper arms and a diadem. He seemed to set the directions on fire. Resorting to yoga, he divided himself into two. While one heated from the sky, the other arrived before Kunti and spoke to her in sweet words. "O fortunate one! I have appeared here because I am under your control, thanks to the strength of the mantra. O queen! Now that I am under your control, what do you wish me to do? I will do whatever you ask me to." Kunti replied, "O illustrious one! Return to the place you arrived from. O illustrious one! I summoned you out of curiosity. Please be gracious."

'The sun said, "O slender-waisted one! I will go as you have asked me to. But having invoked a god, it is not proper to send him away in vain. O extremely fortunate one! Your desire is to have a son through Surya. He will be unrivalled in this world in valour and he will wear armour and earrings. O one whose gait is like that of an elephant!

Give yourself to me. O beautiful one! I will beget a son, like the one that you desire. O fortunate one! O sweet-smiling one! I will depart after having united with you. Else, I will leave in anger and will curse that brahmana[22] and your father. There is no doubt that I will consume them because of what you have done. Though he does not know about this offence, your father is stupid. That brahmana gave you this mantra without knowing about your character and conduct and I will impose extreme humility on him. O beautiful one! All the gods in heaven, with Purandara at the forefront, have seen how you have deceived me and seem to be smiling. Behold those masses of gods through your divine eyesight. I gave that to you earlier, so that you could see me."'

Vaishampayana said, 'The princess then saw the thirty gods, all stationed in the sky in their respective places, as resplendent and beautiful as the great and dazzling Aditya. On seeing them, the maiden was overcome with shame. Terrified, the goddess spoke these words to Surya. "O lord of the cows! Leave in your vimana. I am a maiden and this conduct of yours is causing me unhappiness. My father, my mother and other elders are the only ones who have the power to give the body away. In this world, preserving the body is honoured as the greatest dharma of women. O Vibhavasu! I summoned you to learn about the strength of the mantra. O lord! I have done this out of childish folly. Please pardon me." Surya replied, "It is because you are a child that I am requesting you. Others do not obtain this from me. O Kunti! O maiden! Give yourself to me. O timid one! You will then obtain peace. You have invoked me and I cannot depart in vain. O one with the unblemished limbs! If I go away, the world will laugh at me. O beautiful one! All the gods will speak about me in jest. Therefore, unite with me and obtain a son who will be like me. O beautiful one! There is no doubt that he will be special in all the worlds."'

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Vaishampayana said, 'The intelligent maiden spoke many sweet words and entreated the one with the thousand rays, but did not succeed. O king! When the maiden could not dissuade the dispeller of darkness, she was afraid of the curse and thought for a long period of time. "My father is innocent. How can I prevent the angry Vibhavasu from cursing him and that brahmana because of what I have done? Though energy and austerities destroy sin, those who are young can be deluded and should not draw near them. Because of my folly, I am now extremely terrified and have been grasped by the arm. How can I perform the task of giving myself up on my own?" Terrified of the curse, she thought about this in many ways. Though she kept smiling repeatedly, her limbs were suffering from delusion. O supreme among kings! She was frightened of the curse and for her relatives. O lord of the earth! Confounded by shame, she spoke these words to the god. Kunti said, "O god! My father is alive, and so are my mother and other relatives. Since they are alive, this violation of the rules should not happen. O

god! If I unite with you, disregarding the rules, because of my deeds, the fame of this lineage will be destroyed in this world. O foremost among those who provide heat! But if you think that this is in accordance with dharma, I will comply with your desire, without being given away by my relatives. O irresistible one! I will remain virtuous even after giving myself to you. Dharma, fame, deeds and the lives of beings are manifest in you."

'Surya said, "O one with the beautiful smiles! O one with the beautiful hips! O fortunate one! Your father, your mother and your elders are not capable of bestowing you. Listen to my words. O beautiful one! O one with the beautiful complexion! O one with the beautiful buttocks! A completely free girl is known as *kanya* in this world, from the root *kan*, because she can desire everyone.[23] O beautiful one! You will not commit any adharma. How can I, with the welfare of the world in mind, commit adharma? O one with the beautiful complexion! It is natural in this world that all women and men should be without restraints.[24] Anything that is against this is a distortion. Having united with me, you will again become a virgin. You will have a mighty-armed and immensely famous son."

'Kunti said, "O dispeller of everything that is dark! If I obtain a son through you, may he have earrings and armour. May he be mighty-armed, brave and immensely strong."

'Surya replied, "He will be mighty-armed and possess earrings. O fortunate one! He will be clad in divine armour and both[25] of these will originate in amrita."

'Kunti said, "If my son's earrings and the excellent armour are created out of amrita, as you have said, you may beget him on me. O god! O illustrious one! Then I will unite with you. May he have valour, beauty and energy and be united with dharma, like you."

'Surya replied, "O queen! O one who has been excited! O timid one! Aditi[26] herself gave me these earrings. I will give them to him, together with this excellent armour."

'Pritha said, "O illustrious god! O god! O lord of the cows! If my son is going to be as you have said, I will happily unite with you."'

Vaishampayana said, 'Having told Kunti that it would be this way, the traveller in the sky and the enemy of Svarbhanu, used the self he had created through yoga to enter her and touched her on the navel.[27] The maiden was overwhelmed with Surya's energy. The goddess fell down on her bed, bereft of her senses. Surya said, "O one with the beautiful buttocks! I have now finished. You will give birth to a son who will be the foremost among all wielders of weapons, but you will become a virgin." O Indra among kings! Overcome with shame, the maiden requested Surya that it might be this way and the one who was rich in resplendence disappeared. Thus the daughter of the king of Kunti[28] was promised and bashfully asked for the sun-god. She fell down on that auspicious bed, overcome with confusion, like a broken creeper. Having confounded her with his fierce rays and having inserted himself in her through yoga, Bhanu did not taint her. The

young maiden again recovered her senses.'

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Vaishampayana said, 'O lord of the earth! In shuklapaksha of the tenth month, like the lord of the stars[29] in the sky, a child was conceived in Pritha's womb. The maiden with the beautiful buttocks was concerned that her relatives would censure her if they got to know about the conception. But people did not get to know. The young maiden lived in the inner quarters and was skilled at protecting herself. No one other than her nurse got to know. In due course of time, through the favours of the god, the maiden, who was excellent in her complexion, gave birth to a son. He was as radiant as the immortals. He was attired in armour and was adorned in golden and brilliant earrings. His eyes were tawny and he had the shoulders of a bull, like his father. As soon as the son was born, the beautiful one consulted the nurse. She placed the child in a basket that was prepared well on all sides. It was comfortable and soft, with covers, and lined with beeswax.[30] With tears in her eyes, she set it afloat on the waters of the river Ashva. O Indra among kings! Though she knew that it was improper for an unmarried maiden to have a child, out of affection for her son, she lamented piteously. She cast away the basket in the waters of the river Ashva.

'Having done this, Kunti wept and spoke these words. Listen to them. "O son! May you be safe from all the beings in the sky, the earth and heaven and from those that roam the water. May your paths be auspicious and may you be free from obstructions. O son! May those who meet you have no enmity in their minds. May King Varuna, lord of the waters, protect you in the water. May the wind-god, who travels everywhere, protect you in the sky. May your father, foremost among those who provide heat, protect you everywhere. O son! Driven by destiny, he is the one who has given you to me. The Adityas, Vasus, Rudras, Sadhyas, Vishvadevas, the Maruts, together with Indra, the directions and the lords of the directions and all the gods must protect you, in terrain that is smooth and rough. Even if you are in a different region, I will get to know you through your armour. O son! Your father, the god Bhanu Vibhavasu is fortunate. Through his divine eyesight, he will see you flowing down the river. Blessed is the woman who will adopt you as her son. You are the son of a god and when you are thirsty, you will drink milk at her breast. What kind of a dream must the woman, who will adopt you, have had? You are like Aditya in your radiance. You are clad in divine armour. You are adorned in divine earrings. Your eyes are long and wide, like a lotus. Your palms are coppery red, like a lotus. You have a beautiful forehead and beautiful hair. O son! Fortunate are the ones who will see you crawling around on the ground, uttering inarticulate words and covered in dust. O son! Fortunate are those who will see you become a youth, like a lion with a mane, in the forests of the Himalayas." O king!

Thus did Pritha piteously lament, in many ways, as she consigned the basket to the waters of the river Ashva, in the company of her nurse and at night. Overcome with grief for her son, the lotus-eyed one wept. Pritha yearned to see her son. She cast away the basket and returned again to the palace, overcome with grief, but frightened that her father might get to know.

'The basket flowed from the river Ashva to the river Charmanvati, from Charmanvati to Yamuna and from there, it went to Ganga. The waves of the Ganga bore the son and the basket to the city of Champa, the habitation of charioteers. With divine armour and earrings that were created from amrita, the son was protected by the gods, because of what had been ordained by destiny.'

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Vaishampayana said, 'Dhritarashtra had a friend and he was a suta named Adhiratha. At that time, he went to the Jahnavi,[31] together with his wife. O king! His wife was unrivalled on earth in her beauty. The immensely fortunate one was named Radha and she had no son, though she had undertaken special efforts to obtain offspring. She saw the basket floating along, as it willed. It was protected well and was beautiful with ribbons and a handle. The waves of the Jahnavi carried it near her. Driven by curiosity, the beautiful one grasped it. Then she told suta Adhiratha about this. He took the basket out of the water and used instruments to pry it open. Then he saw the boy there. With golden armour, he was as radiant as the morning sun. He had a beautiful face, adorned with radiant earrings. The suta, together with his wife, gazed, their eyes wide with wonder. He then took the boy onto his lap and spoke these words to his wife. "O timid one! O beautiful one! Since I have been born, I have not witnessed such a wonder. I think that a son of the gods has come to us. Since I have no offspring, I am certain that the gods have given me a son." O lord of the earth! Speaking thus, he handed over the son to Radha. Radha then accepted that divine-looking son in accordance with the prescribed rites. This son of a god was beautiful and as splendid as the cup of a lotus.

'She reared him appropriately and he grew up. He was brave. Since that time, she also gave birth to other sons. The boy was clad in expensive armour and wore golden earrings. On seeing this, the brahmanas gave him the name of Vasushena.[32] Thus the infinitely valorous one came to be the son of a suta and was known by the name of Vasushena. The lord was also known as Vrisha. The suta's eldest son grew up to be powerful in his limbs. Through a spy, Pritha got to know that he was clad in celestial armour. In due course, when suta Adhiratha saw that his son had grown up, he sent him to the city of Varanasahrya.[33] There, he went to Drona to learn about weapons. The brave one became Duryodhana's friend. Having obtained the four kinds of weapons from Drona, Kripa and Rama, he became famous in the world as a great archer.[34]

Having allied himself with Dhritarashtra's son, he was engaged in enmity towards the Parthas. He always desired to fight with the great-souled Phalguna.[35] O lord of the earth! Ever since they first saw each other, he competed with Arjuna and Arjuna competed with Karna. On seeing that he possessed earrings and was clad in armour, Yudhishthira thought that he was invincible in battle and was miserable. O Indra among kings! At noon, Karna used to worship the radiant sun, standing in the water and with his hands joined in salutation. Brahmanas who desired riches approached him then. At that time, there was nothing that he would refuse to brahmanas. Indra assumed the form of a brahmana and approached, saying, "Give me." "You are welcome," replied Radheya.'

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Vaishampayana said, 'On seeing the king of the gods disguised as a brahmana, Vrisha welcomed him, though he did not know what his intentions were. Adhiratha's son asked the brahmana, "Beautiful maidens with golden throats or villages full of many enclosures of cattle—what will I give you?" The brahmana replied, "I do not wish for beautiful women with golden throats, or any other objects that heighten pleasure. Give these to those who desire them. O unblemished one! I desire your natural armour and earrings. If you are true to your vows, slice these off and give them to me. O scorcher of enemies! I desire that you give these to me swiftly. I think that this gain is superior to all the other gains." Karna said, "O brahmana! I will give you habitable land, women, cows and rice for many years, but not my armour, together with the earrings." O best of the Bharata lineage! Thus did Karna entreat the brahmana, with many different kinds of words. But he did not desire any other boon. When that supreme among brahmanas wished for no other boon, Radheya laughed and spoke to him again. "O brahmana! My natural armour and earrings have been created from amrita. Because of them, I cannot be slain in all the worlds. I will not part with them. O bull among brahmanas! Take this extensive kingdom on earth, peaceful and without any thorns. Accept them in a happy frame of mind. O supreme among brahmanas! Without my earrings and natural armour, I will become vulnerable before my enemies." When the illustrious chastiser of Paka did not ask for any other boon, Karna laughed and again addressed these words to him. "O lord! O lord of the gods! I know who you are. O Shakra! It is not proper for me to give you a boon that will be in vain. You are the lord of the gods himself and it is you who should give me a boon, since you are the lord of all other beings and the creator of all beings. O god! If I give you my earrings and armour, I will be liable to be killed. O Shakra! You will become an object of ridicule. O Shakra! Therefore, take my earrings and supreme armour, if you so wish. But take them in exchange. Otherwise, I will not give them." Shakra replied, "Ravi[36] had earlier got to know about my intended arrival.

There is no doubt that he has told you everything. O son! O Karna! Therefore, ask for what you want. With the exception of my vajra, you can ask for whatever else you wish." At that, Karna happily approached Vasava.

'Content in his mind, he asked for the invincible shakti. Karna said, "O Vasava! In exchange for my armour and earrings, give me the invincible shakti that kills large numbers of enemies on the field of battle." O protector of the earth! For an instant, Vasava thought about this in his mind. With the spear in mind, he then spoke these words to Karna. "Give me the earrings and the armour from your body. O Karna! Take the shakti from me, but on one condition. When I am fighting with the daityas, this invincible shakti is released from my hand and having killed hundreds of enemies, returns again to my hand. O son of a suta! But in your hands, it will kill one powerful enemy who roars and blazes. Then, it will return to my hand." Karna replied, "I wish to kill only one enemy[37] in a great battle. He roars and blazes and is the source of fear for me." Indra said, "You kill one roaring and powerful enemy in battle. But the one you seek to kill is protected by a great-souled one who is known as the unvanquished boar,[38] Hari and the inconceivable Narayana by those who are learned in the Vedas." Karna replied, "O illustrious one! Nevertheless, give me the invincible shakti, capable of slaying one brave person, so that I can kill the powerful one. I will slice off the earrings and armour and give them to you. But after this, let my wounded limbs not look loathsome." Indra said, "O Karna! You will never look loathsome. You do not utter a falsehood and your body will not be scarred. O supreme among eloquent ones! O Karna! You will again possess the complexion and energy of your father. Your complexion will again become like his. But if you unleash this invincible weapon in a fit of fury, when you possess other weapons, there is no doubt that it will descend on you." Karna replied, "O Shakra! As you have told me, I will release Vasava's weapon only when I confront supreme danger. I promise you this truthfully." O lord of the earth! He then accepted the flaming shakti.

'He grasped his sharp sword and began to cut up his entire body. On seeing Karna cut up his own body, the gods, humans, danavas and masses of siddhas began to roar, because despite the pain, there were no distortions on his face. Celestial drums were sounded and divine flowers were showered down from above, at the sight of Karna, the brave man, smiling repeatedly as he cut up his own body with the sword. Having sliced off the divine armour from his body, while it was still wet, he gave it to Vasava. Then he sliced off and gave the earrings. Because of this deed, Karna came to be known as Vaikartana.[39] Shakra smiled at his deception, thinking that he had accomplished the objective of the Pandavas, and subsequently, soared up to heaven. However, he ensured Karna obtained fame in the world. Having heard that Karna had been deceived, all the sons of Dhritarashtra were miserable and their insolence was shattered. But on learning about the state that the son of the suta had been reduced to, the Parthas were happy in

the forest.'

Janamejaya asked, 'Where did the brave Pandavas reside? How did they learn about these glad tidings? What did they do when the twelve years had passed? O illustrious one! Tell me everything about all this.'

Vaishampayana said, 'Having defeated Saindhava[40] and got Krishna back and having heard the ancient and detailed accounts about gods and rishis from Markandeya, they left Kamyaka hermitage with the brahmanas. With all their chariots, servants, cooks and supervisors of the kitchen, the brave ones among men went to the sacred Dvaitavana, after having completed their entire dreadful stay in the forest.'

Section Forty-Four

Araneya Parva

This parva has 191 shlokas and five chapters.

Chapter 592(295): 17 shlokas
Chapter 593(296): 43 shlokas
Chapter 594(297): 74 shlokas
Chapter 595(298): 28 shlokas
Chapter 596(299): 29 shlokas

Arani *means wood used for kindling and this parva is named after that. Requested by a brahmana whose kindling has been lost, the Pandavas pursue a deer. Failing to answer a yaksha's questions, Nakula, Sahadeva, Arjuna and Bhima are killed, but are restored to life when Yudhishthira answers the yaksha's questions correctly.*

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Janamejaya asked, 'They experienced great sorrow when their wife was abducted. What did the Pandavas do when they obtained Krishna back?'

Vaishampayana said, 'They suffered supreme distress when Krishna was abducted. Together with his brothers, the undecaying king[1] left Kamyaka. Yudhishthira again went to beautiful Dvaitavana. They went towards Markandeya's beautiful hermitage, where there were succulent roots and fruit. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! All the Pandavas began to reside there with Krishna, controlled in their vows and living frugally on a diet of fruit. While Kunti's sons, King Yudhishthira, Bhimasena, Arjuna and the two Pandavas who were Madri's sons lived in Dvaitavana, those scorchers of enemies, with dharma in their souls, devoted to brahmanas and rigid in their vows, experienced a great calamity that eventually ended in happiness. While Ajatashatru[2] was seated with his brothers in the forest, a brahmana swiftly approached and sorrowfully spoke these words to him. "I left my kindling and the churning rod[3] against a tree. But they stuck to the antlers of a deer that rubbed itself against it. O king! The great deer rushed away at great speed from the hermitage, using giant leaps. O king! Swiftly follow the footprints of that great deer. O Pandavas! Bring those back to me, so that my agnihotra is not spoilt." On hearing the words of the brahmana, Yudhishthira felt sorry. Kounteya grasped his bow and left with his brothers. For the sake of the brahmana, all those archers and bulls among men prepared themselves and swiftly dashed after the deer. The Pandavas saw the deer at a short distance and hurled barbed arrows, hollow arrows and iron arrows at it. But the maharathas could not pierce it. While they were trying in this way, the great deer disappeared. On seeing the deer

disappear, those intelligent ones were exhausted and sorry. In that dense forest, they sought shelter under the cool shade of a banyan tree. Their limbs were sore with hunger and thirst and they seated themselves. O descendant of the Kuru lineage! When they were seated, Nakula spoke to his eldest brother, with a heavy heart and lack of patience. "Dharma has never been given up in our lineage. Nor have objectives been lost through laziness. We are superior to all beings. O king! Why has this disaster befallen us again?"'

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'Yudhishthira said, "There are no limits to misfortune. Nor effects or causes. Dharma distributes it, depending on merits and demerits."

'Bhima said, "The attendant dragged Krishna into the assembly hall like a servant. There is no doubt that we are confronted with this calamity because I did not kill him then."

'Arjuna said, "I tolerated the extremely harsh words spoken by the suta's son, which penetrated the bones. There is no doubt that we are confronted with this calamity because of that."

'Sahadeva said, "O descendant of the Bharata lineage! There is no doubt that we are confronted with this calamity because I did not kill Shakuni when he defeated you at the game of dice."'

Vaishampayana said, 'Then King Yudhishthira spoke these words to Nakula. "O Madri's son! Climb a tree and look in the ten directions. Look for water that is nearby, or trees that grow near water. O son![4] Your brothers are exhausted and thirsty." Following these words, Nakula swiftly climbed a tree. After looking in all the directions, he told his eldest brother, "O king! I can see many trees that grow near water. I can hear the cries of cranes. There is no doubt that there is water somewhere here." Kunti's son Yudhishthira, steadfast in his truth, then told him, "O peaceful one! Swiftly go and fetch some water." On his eldest brother's instructions, Nakula agreed and quickly rushed towards the place where the water was. He saw the crystal clear water, surrounded by cranes. Just as he was about to drink it, a voice was heard from heaven. "O son![5] Do not be foolish enough to do this. I have obtained possession of this earlier. O Madri's son! Answer my question. You can then drink it and take it." But Nakula was very thirsty and ignored these words. He drank the cool water. Having drunk it, he collapsed and fell down. When Nakula did not return for a long time, Kunti's son Yudhishthira told his brave brother Sahadeva, the scorcher of enemies. "O Sahadeva! Your brother has been gone for a long time. He is your immediate elder. Go and fetch your brother. Bring water too." On hearing these words, Sahadeva proceeded in that direction. He saw his brother Nakula, lying down dead on the ground. He was sorely

tormented at the sight of his brother. But he was oppressed by thirst. He rushed towards the water and the voice spoke these words. "O son![6] Do not be foolish enough to do this. I have obtained possession of this earlier. Answer my question. You can then drink it and take it, as you wish." But Sahadeva was very thirsty and ignored these words. He drank the cool water. Having drunk it, he collapsed and fell down.

'Then Kunti's son Yudhishthira spoke to Vijaya.[7] "O Bibhatsu! O destroyer of enemies! Your brothers have been gone for a long time. O fortunate one! Go and bring them and the water." At these words, Gudakesha grasped his bow and arrows. The intelligent one grasped his unsheathed sword and proceeded towards the lake. Shvetavahana saw his brothers, the tigers among men who had gone to fetch water, lying down dead on the ground. On seeing them, as if asleep, Kounteya, lion among men, was extremely distressed. He raised his bow and looked around in the forest. Savyasachi could not see any beings in that great forest. He was exhausted and rushed towards the water. As he rushed towards it, the voice was heard from the sky. "Why are you approaching? You will not be able to drink the water by force. O Kounteya! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! If you are able to answer my questions, you will be able to drink the water and take it." Having been thus restrained, Partha said, "Show yourself and then restrain me. You will not be able to speak again in this fashion when my arrows pierce you." Saying this, Partha invoked his arrows with mantras. He displayed his skill at shooting arrows targeted at sound, enveloping the directions. O bull among the Bharata lineage! He unleashed many showers of barbed arrows, hollow arrows and iron arrows towards the sky.

'The yaksha said, "O Partha! What purpose do these exertions serve? Answer my questions and then drink. If you do not answer the questions, you will cease to exist as soon as you drink."'

Vaishampayana said, 'But having unleashed his invincible arrows, he was overcome by thirst. Ignoring the words, he drank and collapsed and fell down. Kunti's son Yudhishthira then spoke to Bhimasena. "O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Nakula, Sahadeva and the unvanquished Bibhatsu have been gone for a long time, having gone to fetch water. O fortunate one! Go and fetch them and bring the water." Having been thus addressed, Bhimasena left in the same direction, where his brothers, tigers among men, had fallen down. On seeing them, Bhima was distressed and was oppressed by thirst. The mighty-armed one thought that this must have been the work of yakshas or rakshasas. He thought, "I will certainly have to fight today. But let me drink the water first." Partha Vrikodara, bull among men, was thirsty and rushed towards the water.

'The yaksha said, "O son![8] Do not be foolish enough to do this. I have obtained possession of this earlier. O Kounteya! Answer my question. You can then drink it and take it."'

Vaishampayana said, 'Bhima ignored the words of the infinitely energetic yaksha. He

drank, collapsed and fell down. O bull among men! At this, the king who was Kunti's son began to think. Tormented in his mind, the mighty-armed one arose. He entered the great forest, bereft of the sounds of people. It was infested with ruru deer, boar and birds. There were dark, colourful and beautiful trees, abuzz with the sounds of bees and birds. The immensely fortunate one entered the forest and saw the beautiful pond, as it was covered with a net of gold. It seemed to have been created by Vishvakarma.[9] It was covered with a bed of lotuses, *sindhuvaras*,[10] cane, ketakas,[11] karaviras[12] and pippalas.[13] He was exhausted and approaching the lake, gazed at it with wonder.'

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Vaishampayana said, 'He saw his dead brothers, as glorious as Shakra, like dislodged guardians of the world[14] when the end of the yuga had arrived. He saw Arjuna dead, with his bow and arrows scattered and Bhimasena and the twins, motionless and bereft of life. He shed tears of sorrow and breathed hot and deep sighs. Using his intelligence, he began to think. "Who has killed these brave ones? There are no marks of weapons on them. Nor are there any signs of footprints. I think it must be a great being that has killed my brothers in this way. I must reflect on this with concentration. Perhaps I will find out after drinking the water. Perhaps this is a deed that has been undertaken by Duryodhana, who cannot differentiate between what should be done and what should not be done, in secret, always aided by the wicked-minded king of Gandhara.[15] No brave person can trust that evil one, whose soul has not been perfected. Or perhaps that evil-souled one has employed secret servants." Thus the mighty-armed one thought in many ways. But he did not think that the water was tainted through poison. He thought, "The faces of my brothers are healthy in complexion. These men are excellent and each one of them is capable of withstanding the shock of a flood of water. Who but Yama, the arbiter of destiny, can subjugate them?" Reflecting in this way, he entered the water. As he entered, he heard these words from the sky.

'The yaksha said, "I am a crane that lives on aquatic plants and fish. I have taken your younger brothers to the land of the dead. O prince! If you do not answer my questions, you will be the fifth. O son![16] Do not be foolish enough to do this. I have obtained possession of this earlier. O Kounteya! Answer my questions. Then drink and take the water."

'Yudhishthira said, "Are you the foremost among the Rudras, the Vasus or the Maruts? I am asking you. Which god are you? This is not the task of a bird.[17] Who is the greatly energetic one who has felled these four mountains[18]—Himalaya, Pariyatra, Vindhya and Malaya? O supreme among those who are strong! You have performed an extremely great deed. The gods, the gandharvas, the asuras and the rakshasas are

incapable of withstanding them in a great battle. You have accomplished something that is extraordinary. I do not know what you are doing. Nor do I know your intentions. I am greatly curious, but I am also overwhelmed by fright. You are consuming my heart and have brought fever to my head. O illustrious one! I am asking you. Who are you, established here?"

'The yaksha replied, "I am a yaksha. I am not an aquatic bird. It is I who killed all your greatly energetic brothers."'

Vaishampayana said, 'O king! On hearing these inauspicious words spoken by the yaksha in a harsh voice, he approached nearby and stood there. The bull among the Bharata lineage saw the yaksha, with malformed eyes and gigantic in form, as tall as a tala tree. He was as fiery as the fire and the sun and was invincible like a mountain. The immensely strong one stood on a mound and censured him in a voice that was as deep as the roar of thunder. The yaksha said, "O king! These brothers of yours were repeatedly restrained by me. But they tried to drink the water by force and I killed them. O king! This water should not be drunk by someone who desires his life. O Partha! Do not be foolish. I have obtained possession of this earlier. O Kounteya! Answer my questions. Then drink and take." Yudhishthira replied, "O yaksha! I do not desire what you have possessed earlier. Learned men never praise such desires, nor should men praise themselves on their own. O lord! Ask me. I will answer according to my wisdom."

'The yaksha asked, "What makes the sun rise and who are those near him? What makes him set and on what is he established?"

'Yudhishthira replied, "Brahma makes the sun rise and the gods remain near him. Dharma makes him set and he is established in truth."

'The yaksha asked, "How does one become learned? How does one attain greatness? O king! How does one obtain a second? How does one become intelligent?"

'Yudhishthira replied, "One becomes learned through the sacred texts.[19] One attains greatness through austerities. One obtains a second through perseverance.[20] One becomes intelligent by serving the elders."

'The yaksha asked, "What is the divine trait of brahmanas? What dharma of theirs is like that of the virtuous? What are their human traits? Which of their traits are like that of those without virtue?"

'Yudhishthira replied, "The study of the Vedas is their divine trait. Austerities are like that of the virtuous. Mortality is their human trait. Slander is like the conduct of those without virtue."

'The yaksha asked, "What is the divine trait of kshatriyas? What dharma of theirs is like that of the virtuous? What are their human traits? Which of their traits are like that of those without virtue?"

'Yudhishthira replied, "Arrows and weapons are their divine traits. Sacrifices are like that of the virtuous. Fear is their human trait. Desertion is like the conduct of those

without virtue."

'The yaksha asked, "Which is the single sacrificial chant? What is the sacrificial formula? What do sacrifices need? And what can sacrifices not transgress?"

'Yudhishthira replied, "The breath of life[21] is the single sacrificial chant. The mind is the sacrificial formula. Sacrifices need speech. Sacrifices cannot transgress speech."

'The yaksha asked, "What is the best among those that descend? What is supreme among those that are sown? What is the best among those that stand? What is supreme among those that speak?"

'Yudhishthira replied, "Rain is best among those that descend. Seeds are supreme among those that are sown. Cows are best among those that stand. Sons are supreme among those that speak."[22]

'The yaksha asked, "Who experiences the objects of the senses, is intelligent, is worshipped by all the beings in the world and breathes, but is not alive?"

'Yudhishthira replied, "A person who does not render offerings to the five—gods, guests, servants, ancestors and himself—breathes, but is not alive."

'The yaksha asked, "What is heavier than the earth? What is higher than the sky? What is swifter than the wind? What is more numerous than men?"

'Yudhishthira replied, "The mother is heavier than the earth. The father is higher than the sky. The mind is swifter than the wind. Worries are more numerous than men."[23]

'The yaksha asked, "What does not close its eyes while asleep? What does not move when it is born? What has no heart? What grows through speeding?"

'Yudhishthira replied, "A fish does not close its eyes while asleep. An egg does not move when it is born. A stone has no heart. A river grows through speeding."

'The yaksha asked, "Who is a friend to one who is travelling? Who is a friend at home? Who is a friend to one who is sick? Who is a friend to one who is about to die?"

'Yudhishthira replied, "A caravan is a friend to a traveller. A wife is a friend at home. A physician is a friend to one who is sick. Charity is a friend to one who is about to die."

'The yaksha asked, "What travels alone? What is born again after birth? What is a cure for cold? What is the greatest field?"

'Yudhishthira replied, "The sun travels alone. The moon is born again after birth. Fire is the cure for cold. The earth is the greatest field."

'The yaksha asked, "In a single word, what is dharma? In a single word, what is fame? In a single word, what is heaven? In a single word, what is happiness?"

'Yudhishthira replied, "In a single word, dexterity is dharma. In a single word, generosity is fame. In a single word, truth is heaven. In a single word, conduct is happiness."

'The yaksha asked, 'What is a man's self? What is the friend given by destiny? What is the support of his life? What is the best refuge?"

'Yudhishthira replied, "A son is a man's self. The wife is the friend given by destiny.

Rains are the support of his life. Generosity is the best refuge.”

‘The yaksha asked, “What is supreme among objects that are lauded? What is supreme among riches? What is the supreme gain? What is supreme happiness?”

‘Yudhishthira replied, “Dexterity is supreme among objects that are lauded. Knowledge of the sacred texts is supreme among riches. Health is the supreme gain. Satisfaction is supreme happiness.”

‘The yaksha asked, “What is supreme dharma in this world? What dharma always leads to fruits? What does not grieve when it is controlled? What alliance never breaks?”

‘Yudhishthira replied, “Non-violence is supreme dharma. The dharma of the three[24] always leads to fruits. The mind does not grieve when it is controlled. An alliance with the righteous never breaks.”

‘The yaksha asked, “If abandoned, what makes one pleasant? If abandoned, what does not lead to sorrow? If abandoned, what ensures prosperity? If abandoned, what makes one happy?”

‘Yudhishthira replied, “The abandoning of pride makes one pleasant. The abandoning of anger does not lead to sorrow. The abandoning of desire ensures prosperity. The abandoning of desire makes one happy.”

‘The yaksha asked, “When is a man dead? When is a kingdom dead? When is a funeral ceremony dead? When is a sacrifice dead?”

‘Yudhishthira replied, “A poor man is dead. A kingdom without a king is dead. A funeral ceremony performed without a learned brahmana is dead. A sacrifice without dakshina is dead.”

‘The yaksha asked, “What is the right direction? What is spoken of as water? O Partha! What is food and what is poison? What is the right time for a funeral ceremony? Then you can drink and take.”[25]

‘Yudhishthira replied, “The virtuous are the right direction. The sky is water. The cow is food. A request is poison. A brahmana is the best time for a funeral sacrifice.[26] O yaksha! What do you think?”

‘The yaksha said, “O scorcher of enemies! You have answered all my questions correctly. Tell me. Who is a man? Which man possesses all riches?”

‘Yudhishthira replied, “The reputation of good deeds touches heaven and earth. As long as that reputation remains, one is said to be a man. One to whom the pleasant and the unpleasant, happiness and unhappiness and the past and the future are equal, is a man who possesses all riches.”

‘The yaksha said, “O king! You have explained who is a man and which man possesses all riches. Therefore one of your brothers, whichever one you wish, will live.”

Yudhishthira replied, “O yaksha! Nakula is dark, with red eyes, mighty arms and a broad chest. He is as tall as a shala tree. He will live.”

'The yaksha said, "You love Bhimasena and you depend on Arjuna. O king! Why do you then wish Nakula, who is your stepbrother, to be alive? Bhima has strength equal to ten thousand elephants. Why do you discard him and wish Nakula to live? People say that Bhimasena is your beloved. Out of what sentiments do you wish your stepbrother to live? All the Pandavas depend on the strength of Arjuna's arms. But you discard him and wish Nakula to live."

'Yudhishthira replied, "Non-violence is supreme dharma. It is my view that this is the supreme objective. I am attracted to non-violence. O yaksha! Nakula shall live. Men know of me as a king who always follows dharma. I will not deviate from my own dharma. O yaksha! Let Nakula live. Madri is like Kunti and I see no difference between the two. I wish the same for both my mothers. O yaksha! Let Nakula live."

'The yaksha replied, "O bull among the Bharata lineage! Since you think that non-violence is superior to artha and kama, all of your brothers will be restored to life."'

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Vaishampayana said, 'At the yaksha's words, the Pandavas stood up. All their hunger and thirst disappeared in an instant.

'Yudhishthira said, "Unvanquished, you are standing on one leg in the lake. I am asking you. Which god are you. I do not think that you are a yaksha. Are you one of the Vasus or one of the Rudras? Are you the foremost among the Maruts? Are you the wielder of the vajra, the lord of the thirty gods? Each of my brothers is capable of fighting hundreds and thousands. I do not see a means whereby all of them can be killed. I see that their senses have been restored and they have awakened pleasantly. Are you our well-wisher or are you our father?"

'The yaksha replied, "O son! O one whose valour is mild! I am your father Dharma. O bull among the Bharata lineage! Know that I arrived with a desire to see you. Fame, truth, self-control, purity, uprightness, humility, steadfastness, charity, austerities and brahmacharya are my body. Know that non-violence, impartiality, peacefulness, austerities, purity and lack of envy are gates towards me. You have always been dear to me. It is fortunate that you are devoted to the five.[27] It is fortunate that you have conquered the six states.[28] Two occur early, two in the middle and two at the end, leading to the hereafter. I am Dharma. O fortunate one! I came here to test you and am satisfied with your non-violence. O unblemished one! I will grant you a boon. O Indra among kings! Ask for a boon. O unblemished one! I will grant it to you. Men who are devoted to me never suffer from misfortune."

'Yudhishthira said, "The deer ran away with his[29] kindling. May his fires not be destroyed. That is the first boon I ask for."

'Dharma replied, "O lord! O Kounteya! In order to test you, I robbed the brahmana of

his kindling in the form of a deer."'

Vaishampayana said, 'The illustrious one granted him that boon. Then he asked the fortunate one, who was like an immortal, to ask for another boon.

'Yudhishthira said, "The twelve years of dwelling in the forest have passed and the thirteenth has arrived. Wherever we may live, may people not be able to recognize us."'

Vaishampayana said, 'The illustrious one granted him that boon. He again comforted Kounteya, for whom truth was his valour. "O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Even if you travel the earth in your own forms, no one in the three worlds will be able to recognize you. O extender of the Kuru lineage! Through my favours, you will spend the thirteenth year, hidden and undetected, in the city of Virata. Whatever form each of you desires to assume in your mind, that will be the disguise you will adopt according to your wishes. Return the kindling to the brahmana, because I stole it in the form of a deer to test you. O son! Ask for a third boon that is great and unmatched. O king! You have been born from me and Vidura has also been born from a part of me." Yudhishthira replied, "O eternal god of the gods! It is sufficient that I have set my eyes on your person. O father! I will happily accept whatever boon you are satisfied to grant me. O lord! May I always be able to conquer avarice, delusion and anger. May my mind always be inclined towards generosity, austerity and truth." Dharma said, "O Pandava! You are naturally endowed with all the qualities. You are dharma yourself. But you will obtain what you ask for." Having said this, the illustrious Dharma, who sustains the worlds, disappeared. The intelligent Pandavas were reunited and slept happily. Freed from exhaustion, all the brave ones returned to the hermitage and gave the kindling to the ascetic brahmana. A self-controlled man who restrains his senses and reads this great account of the restoration and meeting of the father and the son,[30] an account that extends fame, lives for a hundred years with sons and grandsons. Men who know of this good account are never inclined towards adharma and are not separated from their well-wishers. They do not steal the possessions of others or violate other people's wives. They never find pleasure in vile sentiments.'

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Vaishampayana said, 'When the Pandavas, for whom truth was their valour, had been granted leave by Dharma, they were ready to spend the thirteenth year in hiding and in disguise. Rigid in their vows, the intelligent ones seated themselves. Hands joined in salutation, those great-souled and righteous ones spoke to the ascetics, who had lived in the forest out of affection for them. The ones who had lived there, steady in their vows, sought their permission.[31] "All of you know everything about how the sons of Dhritarashtra have robbed us of our kingdom through deceit and have injured us in many other ways. Amidst great hardship, we have lived in the forest for twelve years.

The thirteenth year, which must be spent undetected, still remains. We must spend that time in concealment and we seek your permission. The enemies who always resent us, the evil-souled Suyodhana and Karna with Soubala,[32] will try to create difficulties for us, our citizens and our relatives, should they manage to detect us. Will we again be established in our own kingdom and country, together with all the brahmanas?" Having spoken these words, King Yudhishthira, the pure son of Dharma, was oppressed by grief and with his voice choking with tears, lost his senses. Then all the brahmanas and his brothers comforted him.

'Dhoumya spoke these words, full of grave import, to the king. "O king! You are learned, self-controlled, true to your promises and in control of your senses. Such men are not confounded when they confront a calamity. In times of difficulty, even the great-souled gods have gone into hiding in many places, with the objective of subjugating their enemies. To accomplish the task of subjugating the strength of his enemies, Indra went to a hermitage in the land of the nishadhas, located on the slopes of a mountain, and hid there.[33] To kill the daityas, Vishnu spent a long time in hiding in Aditi's womb and was then born as Hayashira.[34] Disguising himself in the form of a dwarf, the one whose form is that of the brahman, used his valour to rob Bali of his kingdom.[35] You have heard about this. O son! You have heard everything about how brahmarshi Ourva accomplished the objective of the worlds while hidden in a thigh.[36] O one learned in dharma! You have heard how Hari hid himself in Shakra's vajra so that Vritra might be killed. You have heard everything about how Agni entered and concealed himself in the water to accomplish the task of the gods. O son! The supremely energetic Vivasvat lived in hiding in earth and later burnt up all his enemies. Vishnu, terrible in his deeds, lived in Dasharatha's house and in disguise, killed Dashagriva in battle.[37] Thus did the great-souled ones live in disguise. Then they conquered their enemies in battle and you will also triumph in that way." Yudhishthira was thus comforted by the words of Dhoumya, who knew about dharma, and using his own intelligence and knowledge of the sacred texts, no longer wavered.

'The mighty-armed and immensely strong Bhimasena, foremost among strong ones, spoke to the king and raised his spirits. "O great king! Look at Gandivadhanva.[38] Because of his devotion to dharma and because of his own intelligence, he has not acted foolishly yet. Nakula and Sahadeva, terrible in their valour, are capable of slaying the enemies, but have always been restrained by me. We will not deviate from whatever task you assign to us. You must tell us what we should do and we will swiftly carry it out and vanquish our enemies." When Bhimasena spoke these words, the brahmanas pronounced supreme benedictions on them. Having bid farewell to the descendants of the Bharata lineage, all of them returned to their own houses. All those who were foremost in knowledge of the Vedas, ascetics and sages, pronounced their blessings in

the prescribed way and desired to see them again. The five learned Pandavas arose with Dhoumya. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The brave ones set out with Krishna. After traversing the distance of a krosha, they seated themselves at a spot. Those tigers among men were ready to begin their sojourn of concealment. Each of them was separately learned in the sacred texts. But all of them were also skilled in consultations. They were knowledgeable about when it was a time for peace and when it was a time for war. Before departing, they sat down and consulted each other.'

This ends Aranyaka Parva.

The fourth volume will have Virata Parva and Udyoga Parva and cover Sections 45 to 60 of the 100 parva classification. It describes the sojourn in disguise of the Pandavas in King Virata's court and the cattle raid in which the Kouravas are defeated. With the period of banishment over, the Pandavas want their share of the kingdom back. When this is refused, Udyoga Parva has the preparations for the inevitable war.

Mahabharata: Volume 4 *will be published in November 2011.*

Acknowledgements

Carving time out from one's regular schedule and work engagements to embark on such a mammoth work of translation has been difficult. The past tense should not be used, since only 30 per cent of the road has yet been traversed. Sometimes, I wish I had been born in nineteenth-century Bengal, with a benefactor funding me for doing nothing but this. But alas, the days of gentlemen of leisure are long over. The time could not be carved out from professional engagements, barring of course assorted television channels, who must have wondered why I have been so reluctant to head for their studios in the evenings. It was ascribed to health, interpreted as adverse health. It was certainly health, but not in an adverse sense. Reading the Mahabharata is good for one's mental health and is an activity to be recommended, without any statutory warnings. The time was stolen in the evenings and over weekends. The cost was therefore borne by one's immediate family, and to a lesser extent by friends. Socializing was reduced, since every dinner meant one less chapter done. The family has first claim on the debt, though I am sure it also has claim on whatever merits are due. At least Suparna does, and these volumes are therefore dedicated to her. I suspect Sirius has no claim on the merits, though he has been remarkably patient at the times when he has been curled up near my feet and I have been translating away. There is some allegory there about a dog keeping company when the Mahabharata is being read and translated.

Most people have thought I was mad, even if they never quite said that. Among those who believed and thought it was worthwhile, beyond immediate family, are M. Veerappa Moily, Ashok Desai, Pratap Bhanu Mehta and Laveesh Bhandari. And my sons, Nihshanka and Vidroha. The various reviewers of the first volume have also been extremely kind. Incidentally, I wouldn't have been able to do it without Vaman Shivram Apte. When he compiled the student's Sanskrit dictionary more than a hundred years ago in Pune, I am certain he had no idea that it would be used so comprehensively to translate the Mahabharata.

Penguin also believed. My initial hesitation about being able to deliver was brushed aside by R. Sivapriya, who pushed me after the series had been commissioned by V. Karthika. And then Sumitra Srinivasan became the editor, followed by Paloma Dutta. The enthusiasm of these ladies was so infectious that everything just snowballed and Paloma ensured that the final product of the third volume was much more readable than what I had initially produced.

When I first embarked on what was also a personal voyage of sorts, the end was never in sight and seemed to stretch to infinity. Now that 30 per cent is over (and 10 per cent more is in the pipeline), the horizon can be seen. And all the people mentioned above have had a role to play in this journey.

[1] Brahmana is a text and also the word used for the highest caste.

[2] A class of religious and philosophical texts that are composed in the forest, or are meant to be studied when one retires to the forest.

[3] The six Vedangas are *shiksha* (articulation and pronunciation), *chhanda* (prosody), *vyakarana* (grammar), *nirukta* (etymology), *jyotisha* (astronomy) and *kalpa* (rituals).

[4] Religion, duty.

[5] Wealth. But in general, any object of the senses.

[6] Desire.

[7] Release from the cycle of rebirth.

[9] Krishna or Krishnaa is another name for Droupadi.

[1] A maharatha is in general a mighty warrior. More specifically, a maharatha is skilled in the use of all weapons and can take on ten thousand warriors single-handedly.

[2] Divine sage.

[3] The supreme soul or *paramatman*.

[4] Yudhishthira.

[5] Shatakratu is one of Indra's names, meaning the performer of one hundred (*shata*) sacrifices (*kratu*).

[6] The sacred *savitri mantra* from the Rig Veda, also known as the *gayatri mantra*. This is an incantation to the sun.

[7] Mount Meru, mythical mountain that is the centre of the earth.

[8] Droupadi's name.

[9] Sons of Pritha or Kunti, that is, the Pandavas.

[10] Vaishampayana is speaking to Janamejaya and telling him the story.

[11] Sage.

[12] Yudhishthira is Dharma's son.

[13] Yudhishthira's name.

[14] The word used is *pradakshina*, which is much more specific than a mere act of circling. This circling or circumambulation has to be done in a specific way, so that the right side (*dakshina*) always faces what is being circled. If one is undertaking a tour of pilgrimage, this must begin with the south, then move to the west, then the north and finally the east. The right side, so to speak, then always faces the centre of the earth.

[15] One of the seven great sages.

[16] Bhishma was Shantanu's son. It never becomes clear what vow Bhishma observed for Shantanu. However, Shantanu fell in love with Satyavati and Bhishma took the vow that he would never marry. This vow could have had something to do with that.

[17] Bhagirathi is one of Ganga's names and the river is so named because King Bhagiratha brought Ganga down from heaven.

[18] Gandharvas are celestial musicians and semi-divine.

[19] Arghya (or *argha*) is an offering made to a guest as a sign of veneration.

[20] Because there is no desire for material possessions.

[21] Because there is no desire for the fruits of undertakings.

[22] Agnishtoma is more than a sacrifice performed with fire (*agni*). There was a class of *soma* sacrifices known as *jyotishtoma* and agnishtoma was part of this, performed for several days during the spring.

[23] Pushkara is near Ajmer and there is a temple to Brahma there. There are several other temples too. However, there is also a Pushkara in the village of Ponkar Kheri in Jind district (Haryana).

[24] Sandhya means union and is used for morning (dawn) and evening (dusk) twilights, when night unites with day. That makes it two sandhyas. The third one is midday (noon), uniting forenoon with afternoon.

[25] The Adityas are the sons of Aditi and the expression is used for gods in general. More specifically, there are twelve Adityas who are manifestations of the sun and shine together at the time of destruction. The names of these twelve Adityas vary, but the most common list is Mitra, Varuna, Aryaman, Daksha, Bhaga, Amsha, Tvashtra, Savita, Pusha, Shakra, Vivasvat and Vishnu. Sometimes, Varuna, Daksha and Amsha are replaced by Dhata, Rudra and Surya.

[26] There are eight Vasus. According to the Mahabharata, they are descended from Brahma. The names of the eight Vasus vary from one text to another. According to the Mahabharata, the names are Anala (alternatively Agni), Dhara (Prithvi elsewhere), Anila (alternatively Vayu), Aha (Antariksha elsewhere), Pratyusha (Aditya elsewhere), Prabhasa (Dyaus elsewhere), Soma (alternatively Chandrama) and Dhruva.

[27] By the time of the Mahabharata, the god Rudra was identified with Shiva. In the plural, the Rudras are slightly inferior companions of Shiva and there are eleven of them. The names of the eleven Rudras vary from one list to another and one such list has Mrigavyadha, Sarva, Nirriti, Ajaekapada, Ahirbudhnya, Pinaki, Dahana, Ishvara, Kapali, Sthanu and Bhava.

[28] Relatively minor gods.

[29] Gods of storm and wind, companions of Indra. The number of Maruts varies.

[30] Apsaras are celestial dancers who serve Indra, sometimes regarded as wives of gandharvas.

[31] Literally, union. Stands for the union between the human soul and the supreme one.

[32] Brahma.

[33] A horse sacrifice.

[34] Vishnu’s name, because Vishnu killed a demon named Madhu.

[35] Obtains the fruits of all the sacrifices.

[36] Maintenance of the sacred fire and the offering of oblations to it.

[37] It is impossible to identify this. Jambudvipa is one of the seven continents (*dvipa*) that surround Mount Meru and Jambumarga is probably a road (*marga*) leading to Jambudvipa.

[38] Famous sage.

[39] Merits of a fire sacrifice.

[40] Kartikeya's name.

[41] Famous sage.

[42] The story of Yayati's fall from heaven has been described in Section 1 (Volume 1).

[43] Mahakala is Shiva's name and Mahakala can be the name of any place where there is a temple to Shiva. However, the most famous of Mahakala temples is in Ujjain (Ujjayini).

[44] A place of pilgrimage in the vicinity of Ujjain, impossible to identify. *Koti* not only means crore, but also highest point. So this could be a nearby tirtha that was at a high altitude.

[45] Uma is Parvati and Uma's consort is Shiva.

[46] Today's Barwaha in Madhya Pradesh, on the banks of the river Narmada.

[47] Shiva's name.

[48] Shiva's name.

[49] Ganapati is Ganesha's name and means the lord (*pati*) of *ganas* (companions of Shiva). The status of ganapatya can mean that one becomes devoted to Ganapati. Alternatively, it can mean that one becomes a chief among men.

[50] Usually interpreted as a celibate person. One who is observing *brahmacharya*, the stage of celibacy, when one is studying. However, brahmacharya means worship of the brahman or following the path of the brahman.

[51] Attains the fruits of agnishtoma.

[52] Charmanvati is the river Chambal. King Rantideva was born in the Bharata lineage. He performed many sacrifices and slaughtered animals, both for sacrifices and for food. Thus, a river of blood issued from the hides (*charma*) of the animals he killed and came to be known as Charmanvati.

[53] There is a minor internal inconsistency, because Pulastya is actually speaking to Bhishma, and Narada is repeating the conversation to Yudhishthira.

[54] Arbuda is Mount Abu in Rajasthan. Arbuda is also the name of a *naga* and the sage Vasishtha had his hermitage in Arbuda. There are many myths connected with the hole in the earth in Arbuda. One of these is the Utanka story, recounted in Section 1 (Volume 1). The hole in the earth that Utanka followed in search of the earrings is the one in Arbuda. In other stories, Indra created the hole in the earth there.

[55] The fruits of donating one thousand cows.

[56] Obtain the fruits from donating one hundred tawny cows. The word *pinga* also

means reddish-brown or tawny.

[57] Prabhasa is near Dvaraka or Dvaravati.

[58] The god of fire. The fire-god is the mouth of the gods because oblations to the gods are offered to the fire.

[59] Atiratra is another sacrifice that was part of jyotishtoma.

[60] Donating one thousand cows.

[61] The fruits of ashvamedha.

[62] There is a minor internal inconsistency, because Pulastya is actually speaking to Bhishma, and Narada is repeating the conversation to Yudhishthira.

[63] The fruits of donating one thousand cows.

[64] In Gujarat.

[65] Pindaraka.

[66] The river Indus.

[67] There is a minor internal inconsistency, because Pulastya is actually speaking to Bhishma, and Narada is repeating the conversation to Yudhishthira.

[68] Ten times the fruits of an ashvamedha. Lord of Shankukarna can be interpreted in more than one way. *Shanku* is a spike and *karna* means an ear. *Shankukarna* means spike-eared and means an ass. However, there is no god identifiable as the lord of asses. Shankukarna was one of Brahma's servants. Therefore, lord of Shankukarna might mean Brahma. However, this Shankukarna was born as Prahlada, devoted to Vishnu. Hence, lord of Shankukarna might also mean Vishnu.

[69] Mahadeva or Shiva.

[70] The fruits of a horse sacrifice.

[71] That is, the demons.

[72] The fruits of a horse sacrifice.

[73] Indra's.

[74]*Siddhi* means accomplishment. Siddhas are semi-divine species who have attained these superhuman accomplishments or faculties.

[75] The land of the five (*pancha*) rivers (*nada*), Punjab. The five rivers are Shatadru, Vipasha, Iravati, Chandrabhaga and Vitasta.

[76] The fruits of the five sacrifices. The five sacrifices are those required to be performed every day by householders—studying and offering oblations to brahmanas, ancestors, gods and all other beings.

[77] This has been identified with Kapildhara (or Kapiladhara) in Madhya Pradesh, near Amarkantaka. But this is contrived, since one is in the region around Punjab.

Bhimasthana is more likely to be Uddiyana or Oddiyana, in the Swat Valley.

[78]*Yoni* means womb, but this is a reference to a geographical place. It is probably Shahbaz Garhi in Mardan division in Pakistan. This was an important place in Gandhara, was known as Varshapura, and there used to be a temple of Parvati there.

[79] Donating one hundred thousand cows.

[80] Brahma.

[81] Donating one thousand cows.

[82] Vimala is identified with Baramula in Kashmir, on the banks of the Jhelum. Baramula is derived from *varaha* (boar) and *mula* (origin or source), a reference to Vishnu's boar incarnation. There was a lake there and Vishnu drained it in the form of his boar incarnation. Vimala tirtha is thus also known as Varaha tirtha.

[83] The fruits of a horse sacrifice.

[84] That is, in the evening.

[85] An oblation made of rice, barley and pulses and boiled in milk and butter.

[86] Donating a hundred thousand cows.

[87] Udhampur in Jammu and Kashmir. Udhampur was once known as Devika *nagari* (city) on the banks of the Devaka or Devika river. There is an ancient Devika temple in Udhampur.

[88] The wielder of the trident is Shiva. There is a famous Shiva temple in Udhampur.

[89] Not to be confused with the famous Kamakhya temple in Guwahati in Assam.

[90] This is Yaajana, while the earlier one is Yajana.

[91] A yojana is between 8 to 9 miles.

[92] Other than being a specific geographical place, *dirghasatra* means a long or prolonged (*dirgha*) sacrifice (*satra*).

[93] The stipend or fee paid to brahmanas and thus, gifts given at sacrifices.

[94] Vinasana is also known as Adarshana and was probably near Jaisalmer in Rajasthan.

[95] The same as Chamasa.

[96] Donating one thousand cows.

[97] Nagas aren't snakes. In this translation, they have throughout been translated as serpents, rather than snakes. Nagas live in a distinct geographical region of their own and possess semi-divine attributes. For instance, they can assume any form at will.

[98] Shashayana literally means the abode or path (*ayana*) of rabbits (*shasha*). This tirtha was on the banks of the Sarasvati.

[99] Donating one thousand cows.

[100] Donating infinite cows.

[101] Shiva's epithet. Literally, the one with the bull (*vrisha*) on his banner (*dhvaja*).

[102] Shiva.

[103]*Sangama* means union or confluence and this is the confluence of the Sarasvati with the ocean.

[104] Celestial singers.

[105] The bright half of the lunar month.

[106] Vishnu or Krishna.

[107] Donating one thousand cows.

[108] There is a minor internal inconsistency, because Pulastya is actually speaking to Bhishma, and Narada is repeating the conversation to Yudhishthira.

[109] Another name for the nagas.

[110] Another name for Kurukshetra.

[111] There is a minor internal inconsistency, because Pulastya is actually speaking to Bhishma, and Narada is repeating the conversation to Yudhishthira.

[112] Yakshas are semi-divine species and companions of Kubera, the god of treasure. Kurukshetra was bounded to the north by the river Sarasvati and to the south by the river Drishadvati. It also had four yakshas as gatekeepers or guardians in four directions —Ratna to the north-east, Tarantuka to the northwest, Kapila to the south-west and Machakruka to the south-east. Machakruka's abode is today identified as Sinkh, a village in the district of Panipat.

[113] Donating one thousand cows.

[114] Hari is Vishnu. The word *satata* means eternal. The place was presumably thus named because Hari was eternally present there.

[115] Fruits of a horse sacrifice.

[116] That is, a man who goes there.

[117] A kind of soma sacrifice observed during the night.

[118] Donating a thousand cows.

[119] Literally, a place where ten ashvamedha sacrifices have been held. This is probably the one in Didwara village in Jind district.

[120] Of ten horse sacrifices.

[121] Literally, the goddess of snakes.

[122] The fruits of agnishtoma.

[123] Tarantuka is identified as the village of Behar Jaka today. It is partly in Patiala district (Punjab) and partly in Kaithal district (Haryana).

[124] Donating one thousand cows.

[125] The land of the five (*pancha*) rivers (*nada*), Punjab.

[126] There are several places known as Kotitirtha. There is a famous one in Varaha Mula (Baramula). But this is probably the one in Hat village in Haryana.

[127] Varaha Mula or Baramula is the obvious identification. But one is in the region around Kurukshetra. So one probably means the village Brah (derived from Varaha) near Jind in Haryana.

[128] There are several Somatirthas and several Jayanti rivers. This Jayanti River is near Chandigarh.

[129] Donating a thousand cows.

[130] Vishnu's epithet.

[131] Munjavata is in Nirjan village in Jind district.

[132] The *ganas* are Shiva's companions. Ganapati is not only Ganesha's name. It also means one who is the lord (*pati*) of the ganas.

[133] Parashurama, the son of Jamadagni.

[134] The fruits of a horse sacrifice.

[135] Parashurama's story is recounted in Section 1 (Volume 1). After destroying the kshatriyas, Parashurama constructed five lakes with their blood and this is known as Samanta Panchaka, the region around Kurukshetra. *Samanta* means on all sides and *panchaka* means five. Alternatively, Samanta Panchaka means the region that was five yojanas on all sides.

[136] Parashurama was descended from the sage Bhrigu.

[137] This may alternatively mean that one gets the fruits obtained through donating a lot of gold.

[138] Kayashodhana literally means cleansing (*shodhana*) of the body (*kaya*). In a village known as Kasoon in Almora district of Uttarakhand, there is a Kayashodhana tirtha. But this might not be the one that is meant. What is probably meant is the one in Jind district, in the village of Kasohan (derived from Kayashodhana).

[139] This literally means the rescue of the worlds.

[140] Probably in the sense of obtains.

[141] The word literally means wealth, riches and prosperity. There is a Shri tirtha in the village of Simla in Haryana.

[142] There is a Kapila tirtha in a village known as Kalayat, about 80 kilometres from

Kurukshetra and close to Kaithal in Haryana. Kalayat is believed to be derived from Kapilayat. Kapila was a famous sage and the expounder of *sankhya* philosophy.

143 Presumably donating one thousand tawny cows.

144 Surya means the sun-god and there are several Surya tirthas. For example, there is a famous one in Mathura. There is yet another famous one on the banks of the Narmada. But since one is in Haryana, neither of these is probably meant. One probably means the Surya tirtha in Boadsham village in Nilokheri block in Karnal.

145 The fruits of agnishtoma.

146 Literally, the abode (*bhavana*) of cows (*gova*).

147 Donating one thousand cows.

148 Now the village of Sanghan in Haryana.

149 Barta village in Haryana.

150 Kubera is the lord of treasures. Since Kubera is mentioned, Ambuvashya is probably Kubera tirtha in Thanesar, on the banks of the Sarasvati.

151 This may be Adi Badri, near Bilaspur in Yamuna Nagar district. There is a temple of Matri Devi or Mantra Devi there.

152 Possibly Siwan in Kaithal district of Haryana.

153 Literally, a place where a dog's (*shvana*) hair (*loma*) is pulled out (*apaha*).

154 Literally, control over the breath of life, a breathing technique that is an integral component of yoga.

155 The text says Shvanalomapanayana, but Shvanalomapanayana and Shvanalomapaha mean the same thing.

156 Dashashvamedha is a place where ten (*dasha*) horse sacrifices (ashvamedha) have been held. There are several places with this name and this one is probably the one in Jind district of Haryana.

157 The word *manusha* means human and this is Manush, in Kaithal district.

158 In Kaithal district, also known as Apaya and a branch of the Chitang River.

159 One-fourth of a yojana.

160 Alternatively, corn.

161 Udumbara is the name of the fig tree and also the flower. According to legend, this flowers once in several thousand years. The udumbara is also the blue lotus, identified with Brahma and the flower itself is also called Brahma.

162 The seven great sages.

163 Kedara and Kapishthala are clearly different names for the same place. Kapishthala could well be today's Kaithal.

[164] Today's Shergarh, in the Sirsa district of Haryana.

[165] The dark fortnight of the lunar month.

[166] Fruits of a horse sacrifice.

[167] That is, the fruits of these.

[168] Anajanma.

[169] There are several rivers in India by the name of Vaitarani. This one flowed through Haryana.

[170] The Dhrishadvati literally means a river with many stones and was one of the two major rivers, together with the Sarasvati.

[171] Donating one thousand cows.

[172] Donating one thousand cows.

[173] At the confluence of the rivers Koushiki and Dhrishadvati.

[174] Literally, Vyasasthali means Vyasa's region and there is a Vyasasthali in Kaithal.

[175] What this means is unclear. Vyasadeva is an immortal and his sons are Dhritarashtra, Pandu and Vidura. There is no record of his having become sorrowful because of any of these sons.

[176] Donating one thousand cows.

[177] This measure is called a *prastha*.

[178] Donating one thousand cows.

[179] This is a reference to Vishnu's *vamana* (dwarf) incarnation.

[180] Pavana is Vayu, the god of the wind.

[181] Shalihotra is in Sarsa village, about 22 km from Kurukshetra.

[182] Donating one thousand cows.

[183] Meaning the forest of Naimisha.

[184] Donating one thousand cows.

[185] There is a Kanyatirtha in the village of Balwanti (or Vridhakanya) in Kaithal district.

[186] Somatirtha is in Jind, known earlier as Jaintapuri.

[187] There were seven (sapta) tributaries or different names for the Sarasvati in different places—Suprabha in Pushkara, Kanchanakshi in Naimisha, Vishala in Gaya, Manasahrida in Uttara Koshala, Suvenu in Kedara, Vimaloda in Gangadvara and Sarasvati in Kurukshetra. Through his powers, the sage Mankanaka guided these seven to a confluence in Kurukshetra, known as Saptasarasvata.

[188] Mahadeva.

[189] Another name for Kapalamochana tirtha, on the banks of the Sarasvati. This is in the tehsil of Jagadhri, close to Bilaspur in Haryana. The reference is to Shiva slicing off one of Brahma's heads and this head (*kapala*) stuck to his hand, because of the sin of killing a brahmana. The head was released (*mochana*) on the banks of the Sarasvati.

[190] Mahadeva having left, Pulastya is speaking again.

[191] This is probably a reference to Parashurama.

[192] Vishvamitra's tirtha is probably in Pehowa (Prithudaka). Prithudaka is named after King Prithu. It is believed that Vishvamitra became a brahmarshi in the Sarasvati temple there.

[193] This is in Pehowa.

[194] That is, the person becomes immortal.

[195] A sage who was Brahma's son.

[196] There is a lake named Madhusrava in Prithudaka. Alternatively, one part of the Koushiki River may have been called the Madhusrava River.

[197] Donating one thousand cows.

[198] Probably the village of Arnai (derived from Aruna), near Pehowa.

[199] Darbhin is probably the sage Baka Dalbhya, the creator of Avatirna tirtha.

[200] Donating four thousand cows.

[201] Donating one thousand cows.

[202] Renuka tirtha is in Ranacha, Haryana.

[203] In the sense that acts of acquisition can be undesirable.

[204] In Palwal district.

[205] Mahadeva's names. Yogeshvara means the lord of yoga, while Vrishadhvaja is the one who has a bull on his standard.

[206] This is difficult to identify, but was on the banks of the Sarasvati. It was also known by the name of Aditya, since Varuna was Aditi's son. The word Oujasa itself means energetic.

[207] Kartikeya's name.

[208] Literally, the gate (*dvara*) to heaven (*svarga*).

[209] Lord of the universe. Mahadeva's name. Mahadeva's wife is Uma. Rudra is another name for Mahadeva.

[210] Padmanabha is Vishnu's name, meaning the one with a lotus (*padma*) for his navel (*nabha*).

[211] That is, the well is equal to three crores of tirthas.

[212] There is a tank named after Vasishtha in Budha Khera, near Safidon.

[213] The berries.

[214] Vibhavasu is another name for the sun-god. Aditya means any god, a son of Aditi. In this context, the sun-god is meant.

[215] The word used is *sarasvata*. Other than Sarasvati's world, this can also mean the world of the Sarasvata brahmanas.

[216] The time of a solar eclipse.

[217] One has obtained the merits of such sacrifices.

[218] Sarasvati should actually be to the north and Drishadvati to the south.

[219] Samantapanchaka is another name for Kurukshetra, usually explained because of the five (pancha) lakes created by Parashurama. Alternatively, it is said that the land was five yojanas in every direction.

[220] The grandfather is Brahma. Kurukshetra is often called Brahma's altar (Brahmavedi) or the northern altar (Uttaravedi).

[221] Literally, sweet-smelling and fragrant. There is also a plant and a flower by the name of Sougandhika.

[222] Mythical beings who were followers of Kubera and could sing well. They were also physically deformed, sometimes described as possessing human heads and bodies of horses.

[223] Plaksha is a fig tree and the Sarasvati originated from the Shivalik hills in the Himalayas from below a fig tree. This fountain at the foot of the fig tree is called Plaksha Prasravana. Plaksha is sometimes also identified with Paonta Sahib in Himachal Pradesh.

[224] Literally, a place where Shiva (Ishana) is established.

[225] Shamya is a wooden sacrificial stick and the distance is six throws of this stick away.

[226] That is, the fruits of a horse sacrifice and donating one thousand cows.

[227]*Shaka* means vegetable, herb or edible leaf. Shakambhari is one who nourishes through shaka and is one of the goddess Durga's manifestations. There are Shakambhari temples throughout India.

[228] Shiva is the destroyer of Tripura. Tripura was the name of three (*tri*) cities (*pura*) created by the demons and was destroyed by Shiva.

[229] Dhumavati is one of the manifestations of the goddess.

[230] Alternatively, the right.

[231] More accurately, Gangadvara, probably Har ki Pauri in Haridwar.

[232] Saptaganga usually means seven (sapta) great rivers, of which, Ganga is one. But clearly, something else is meant here.

[233] Kankhal in Haridwar.

[234] This Kapila was a king of the nagas and Kapilavata was near the source of the Ganga, that is, near Rishikesh in Uttarakhand.

[235] Sangama means confluence. So this probably means the confluence of Ganga with the confluence of the Yamuna and the Sarasvati.

[236] The confluence of the Ganga, the Yamuna and the Sarasvati is at Prayaga (Allahabad).

[237] The source of the Yamuna is in the Yamunotri glacier.

[238] The source of the Sindhu is near Manasa Sarovara, in Tibet.

[239] Ushanas is Shukra's name. So, one goes to Shukra's world.

[240] This might mean Rishikesh.

[241] The night of the new moon (*amavasya*) during krishnapaksha, when there is a conjunction of the sun and the moon and the sun enters the constellation of Kanya (Virgo). This occurs in September or October.

[242] Brahma.

[243] Sacrifice to the gods.

[244] The Sarayu River is in Uttar Pradesh. At the end, Rama immersed himself in the Sarayu River and returned to heaven. Gopratara is about 8 km from Ayodhya.

[245] River in Uttar Pradesh, the Sarayu River is a tributary. This Rama tirtha is probably a reference to Parashurama.

[246] Guha is the king of the *nishadas* in the Ramayana.

[247] That is, the merits will be equal to those from observing a vow for twelve years.

[248] The sun-god. Alternatively, Savitra.

[249] Literally, the gate (*dvara*) to the womb (*yoni*).

[250] The text literally translates as mixing up of wombs, that is, miscegenation.

[251] The sense is that going to Gaya is easier.

[252] Tributary of the Ganga. Gaya is on the banks of the Phalgu River.

[253] Rajagriha is also known as Girivraja and today, it is known as Rajgir. There is a hot spring there. Figures of yakshas and yakshinis have been found in Rajagriha. The naga Maninaga is believed to have lived in Rajagriha and today, that particular place is known as Maniyar Nath.

[254] Famous sage.

[255] Ahalya was the sage Goutama's wife and Indra used deceit to seduce her.

[256] Shri means Lakshmi, the goddess of wealth. It also means beauty, in addition to prosperity. Shri can refer to the place, as well a person. Since Ahalya was beautiful, the text probably means Ahalya.

[257] A royal sage, that is a king who has attained the characteristics of a rishi.

[258] Originally, the gods were believed to be thirty or thirty-three in number.

[259] Vinashana is the place where the Sarasvati river disappears into the desert.

[260] River in Nepal that eventually becomes part of the Ganga.

[261] Demi-gods similar to the yakshas, companions of Kubera.

[262]*Shalagrama* is a sacred stone that is Vishnu's personification. According to legend, Vishnu promised that he would be present as this stone in the Gandaki River. The Gandaki River is therefore famous for its shalagrama stones.

[263] Literally, Mahadeva means the great god. Mahadeva is usually used for Shiva. But here, it is being used for Vishnu.

[264] A river.

[265] This could mean either Shiva or Vishnu.

[266] A river.

[267] Kartikeya.

[268] Brahma is the grandfather.

[269] Probably meaning the Himalayas.

[270] The name of a lake near the peak.

[271] Louhitya (or Lohitya) is the name of the Brahmaputra River, and the name is also used to refer to the kingdom around the river. The Rama in question is Parashurama, who is believed to have visited the area and set up a tirtha there.

[272] The Karatoya River is now in Bangladesh, in the Rajshahi division. The river is believed to have been formed at the time of Shiva and Parvati's marriage, when water (*toya*) was poured on Shiva's hands (*kara*).

[273] Brahma.

[274] This is a reference to Sagar island, also known as Gangasagar, in West Bengal.

[275] In Orissa. Viraja is Jajpur, in Cuttack district.

[276] That is, donating ten thousand cows.

[277] Both the Shona (Sone or Son) and Narmada originate in Madhya Pradesh. The Narmada originates in Amarkantak.

[278] Donating eleven bulls.

[279] Badarika or Badarikashrama is in Haridwar.

[280] Jamadagni's son is Parashurama and Parashurama's tirtha in Mahendra or Mahendra Parvat is near Chiplun, in the Ratnagiri district of Maharashtra. Mahendra Parvat is also known as the southern Kailash.

[281] Matanga was a sage. This Kedara might be the Mallikarjuna Jyotirlinga in Andhra Pradesh.

[282] Sanchi was once known as Shri (or Sri) Parvata, though this might not be the Mount Shri of the text.

[283] The Pandya kingdom, in today's Tamil Nadu.

[284] Meaning heaven.

[285] The river Kaveri flows through Karnataka and Tamil Nadu.

[286] Kanyakumari in Tamil Nadu.

[287] Gokarna is on the shores of the ocean, in Karnataka and houses a famous temple to Shiva.

[288] Bhuta has several meanings. Here, it means spirits or ghosts.

[289] Malevolent beings.

[290] Gayatri is a famous mantra from the Vedas, also personified as a goddess. There is no identifiable region known as Gayatri. However, there is the Gayatri River.

[291] The gayatri mantra is metrical and musical, but only pure brahmanas know how to recite it properly. There are inferior brahmanas born of mixed parentage and their recitals will not be metrical and musical, except in the region known as Gayatri.

[292] Venna (or Vena) is a tributary of the Godavari.

[293] The Varada River flows through Karnataka and joins the Tungabhadra.

[294] The Krishna River originates in Mahabaleshwar in Maharashtra and so does the Venna. The rivers Koyna and Gayatri also originate there. The lake of the gods is Venna lake.

[295] The Payoshni is either the Purna or the Tapti.

[296] Shurparaka is a region (kingdom) near the origins of the Narmada, that is, what is the southern part of Gujarat now. Shurparaka was founded by Parashurama, Jamadagni's son.

[297] Saptagodavari is in the East Godavari region of Andhra Pradesh in Draksharama (a corruption of Daksha ashrama).

[298] Sarasvata was the son of Angiras. The sages had respectfully spread out their upper garments for him to sit on.

[299] Brahma.

[300] Bhrigu.

[301] In the Bundelkhand region, in Banda district of Uttar Pradesh.

[302] Chitrakuta is partly in Madhya Pradesh and partly in Uttar Pradesh. The Mandakini joins the Alaknanda in Rudraprayag.

[303] Skanda or Kartikeya.

[304] There is a minor internal inconsistency, because Pulastya is actually speaking to Bhishma, and Narada is repeating the conversation to Yudhishthira.

[305] Shringaverapura is near Allahabad and was the capital of the *nishada* kingdom. Rama, Lakshmana and Sita crossed the Ganga there.

[306] In this context, demi-gods with demonic characteristics.

[307] Suparna means one with beautiful feathers. Suparna is Garuda's name, but is also a general name for birds.

[308] Chakracharas are those that travel in circles. Beyond that, it is not clear what is meant. Perhaps one means the stars and the planets. It is more likely that this should really be *characharas*, in which case, one means mobile and immobile objects.

[309] Another name for the Ganga.

[310] Tapana is the sun-god and his daughter is the Yamuna.

[311] There is a minor internal inconsistency, because Pulastya is actually speaking to Bhishma, and Narada is repeating the conversation to Yudhishthira.

[312] Vasuki is the king of the nagas and Bhogavati is his capital.

[313] Literally, the flight (*prapatana*) of the swans (*hamsa*).

[314] Literally, where ten (dasha) horse sacrifices (ashvamedha) have been held.

[315] Heaven.

[316] Vasava is Indra's name.

[317] Bhishma's.

[318] Yudhishthira.

[319] Pulastya.

[320] The text of the critical edition mentions Galava twice, whereas other versions have Jabali in place of the second mention of Galava.

[321] The Mahabhisha story has been told in Section 1 (Volume 1). He was reborn as Shantanu.

[322] The sun.

[323] Indra.

[324] Yudhishthira.

[325] Brahma.

[326] That is, Arjuna and Krishna.

[327] The lotus-eyed one, Vishnu and Krishna's name.

[328] *Satya, treta* and *dvapara yugas*, *kali yuga* is still in the future.

[329] An unrivalled warrior, whose valour is unlimited, greater than a *maharatha*.

[330] Ashvatthama.

[331] A suta was the son of a kshatriya father and a brahmana mother and by profession sutas were charioteers. But they were also bards and raconteurs.

[332] Of battle.

[333] Here, Indra's weapon means Indra's bow, a term used for a rainbow. Since clouds are part of the imagery, Gandiva is being compared to a rainbow.

[334] Literally, the cause (*karana*) of that which never decays (*akshaya*).

[335] Koushika is one of Vishvamitra's names. Kusha was his great grandfather.

[336] Jamadagni's son was Parashurama. While there are different versions of the Vishvamitra story, the reference here is to the story where Vishvamitra was almost like Parashurama's ancestor. Gadhi had a daughter named Satyavati and she was married to Richika. Gadhi was a kshatriya and Richika was a brahmana. Richika prepared some boiled rice. Part of this was to be given to Satyavati, so that she would have a son with the characteristics of a brahmana and part was to be given to Satyavati's mother, so that she would have a son with the characteristics of a kshatriya. But these were interchanged. Consequently, Satyavati's mother gave birth to Vishvamitra and Satyavati gave birth to Jamadagni.

[337] Kannauj in Uttar Pradesh.

[338] Brahma.

[339] *Yaga* is a sacrifice.

[340] Parashurama.

[341] The name of a river.

[342] Nala.

[343] Kanyakumari.

[344] Tamraparni was an old name for Sri Lanka. But this must be the Tamraparni River in Tamil Nadu, now known as Thamirabarani.

[345] Heaven.

[346] All of these are Vishnu's names.

[347] Creeper believed to blossom at a woman's touch.

[348] Kubera is the sage Vishrava's son. His more common mount (*vahana*) is a mongoose. But he is also shown with a horse or a man as his mount.

[349] Literally, with *vaidurya* on its peak.

[350] The story of Yayati's fall is recounted in Section 1 (Volume 1).

[351] Brahma's.

[352] A vaikhanasa is a hermit or ascetic, a brahmana who has resorted to the forest.

[353] Heaven.

[354] The name Sarasvati means one with many lakes or pools (*saras*).

[355] The sacrificial peg or staff is *shamya*. It was thrown to measure out the length of the sacrificial ground.

[356] The text says one hundred hundred thousand.

[357] Mountainous tribes who lived through hunting.

[358] Indra's name.

[359]*Amrita* has been translated as ambrosia. The reference is to the churning of the ocean. In the course of the churning, both amrita and the weapon arose.

[360] Vishvavasu was the king of the gandharvas. Chitrasena was a king of the gandharvas and it was from Chitrasena that Arjuna learnt these skills, described in Section 32. Chitrasena is being described as Vishvavasu's son.

[361] The knowledge of singing and dancing.

[362] Yudhishthira's younger brother is Bhima and Bhima's younger brother is Arjuna.

[363] Indra is telling Lomasha this.

[364] Karna.

[365] Indra is addressing these words to Yudhishthira and they are being repeated by Lomasha.

[366] Arjuna is addressing Lomasha.

[367] Arjuna's name.

[368] Dadhicha (or Dadhichi) donated his bones so that the vajra could be constructed, used by Indra to kill Vritra. Angiras rescued the sun when it was hidden by the Panis in their cave.

[369] The king of Panchala, Drupada.

[370] Hastinapura.

[371] Dhritarashtra's mother was Ambika.

[372] The ninth month in the calendar, alternatively, Agrahayana. Roughly end November to end December. The month is named after the constellation (*nakshatra)*

Mrigashira.

[373] The eighth of the twenty-seven nakshatras.

[374] Their companions and servants.

[375] Tirtha of horses.

[376] Tirtha of cows.

[377] Brahma's.

[378] Brahma's lake.

[379] Vaivasvata is the son of Vivasvata or the sun-god and is one of Yama's names. Dharma also means Yama.

[380] The wielder of the pinaka is Mahadeva. Pinaka means both a bow and a trident.

[381] A sacrifice performed once every four (*chatur*) months (*masa*) and performed at the beginnings of the months of Kartika, Phalguna and Ashadha.

[382] Speaking to Yudhishthira.

[383] Ilvala.

[384] Yama's.

[385] Vatapi.

[386] The father is believed to recreate himself in the form of his son.

[387] As will become clear in the next chapter, the king of Vidarbha did not know that this had been done by Agastya.

[388] The fourth of the twenty-seven nakshatras. The moon was married to all twenty seven, but was partial to the beautiful Rohini.

[389] Agastya.

[390] Rambha is the name of an apsara and the translation has been done with this meaning in mind. However, *rambha* is also the name of a plantain tree. Therefore, with thighs like plantain, is also an accurate translation.

[391] This is a reference to the story about Agastya's birth. Mitra and Varuna were smitten with the apsara Urvashi's beauty. The resultant semen was kept in a pot and became the sages Agastya and Vasishtha. Agastya is often referred to as Kumbhayoni, *kumbha* being a pot.

[392] Vatapi.

[393] Literally, the text says that he released some wind.

[394] Agastya's.

[395]*Idhma* is fuel or firewood for the sacrificial fire and *vaha* means to bear.

[396] Another name for Satya yuga.

[397] Indra's name. Literally, the destroyer of cities.

[398] Brahma.

[399] Partridge.

[400] Vishvakarma, the architect of the gods.

[401] The text uses the word *rodasi* and *rodasi* (or *rodas*) means heaven and earth.

[402] The Kalakeyas are also known as the Kaleyas.

[403] This seems to be a reference to the churning of the ocean, when Mount Mandara was the churning rod and was supported at the base by Vishnu in the form of a turtle (*kurma*). However, the use of the word 'hand' remains unclear.

[404] In some versions of the Vritra story, Vritra was a brahmana. Though Vritra had been killed, Indra might have been scared because he had killed a brahmana, other than the obvious reason of his not believing that Vritra was truly dead.

[405] Vaikuntha is one of Naryana's ephithets and also the name of his abode.

[406] That is, mobile and immobile.

[407] This is a reference to Vishnu's boar (varaha) incarnation.

[408] This is a reference to Vishnu's man-lion (narasimha) incarnation.

[409] This is a reference to Vishnu's dwarf (vamana) incarnation.

[410] Several demons had the name of Jambha. The more common Jambha was killed by Indra, though in one of the accounts, he was aided by Vishnu. There was another Jambha who was killed by Krishna.

[411] Those born from wombs, those born from eggs, vegetables and plants and those born from sweat (insects).

[412] The text uses the term *havyakavya*. Oblations offered to gods are called *havya* and oblations offered to ancestors are called *kavya*.

[413] Indra has one thousand eyes.

[414] While Parameshthi is usually Brahma's ephithet, it is also an epithet for Vishnu and Shiva, and even for Agni and Garuda.

[415] Having killed the brahmana Vritra, Indra disappeared and Nahusha temporarily obtained the title of Indra, the lord of the gods. There are different reasons for his fall from grace and one of these is Agastya's curse.

[416] The sun.

[417] There doesn't seem to be any difference between kinnaras and kimpurushas.

[418] Kimshuka is the name of a tree with red blossoms and is also the name of the flower.

[419] All of these are Shiva's names. Pinaki is the wielder of the pinaka, Shulapani is the one with a *shula* (trident) in his hand and Tryaksha (or Tryambaka) is the one with three eyes. Shiva destroyed the demon fortress named Tripura. Hara and Rudra are also Shiva's names.

[420]*Makara* is a mythical creature and can also be translated as a shark.

[421]*Patala*. There are actually seven nether regions—*atala, vitala, sutala, rasatala, talatala, mahatala* and patala. Thus patala is the lowest of the seven nether regions.

[422] Mahadeva.

[423] Asamanja was Shaibya's son.

[424] Anshuman is actually a grandson. But the word *tata* (son) is not only used for a son, but is affectionately used for anyone who is an inferior or subordinate.

[425] There is a clear error in the text of the critical edition. The word used is *khura*. Khura has several meanings, hoof, razor, perfume, the foot of a bedstead—but none of them make any sense. Some other versions say *gala* (neck or throat) and that would be fine, since the children could be grabbed by the neck.

[426] The word used is *naraka* (hell) and this is not quite the same as the nether regions.

[427] Anshuman.

[428] Literally fathers, but meaning uncles.

[429] The three-coursed one is Ganga, because the Ganga flows in heaven, on earth and in the nether regions.

[430] Shiva.

[431] Sagara.

[432] Anshuman's.

[433] The ocean is called *sagara*, meaning Sagara's son.

[434] Ancestors.

[435] Shrike or thrush.

[436] Gallinules.

[437] Woodpeckers.

[438] Chakora birds. However, chakoras are also mentioned separately.

[439] Eight elephants guard the eight cardinal directions.

[440] Semi-divine species.

[441] Ganga.

[442] Nilakantha is Mahadeva's name. His name is Nilakantha, because his throat (*kantha*) became blue (*nila*) after swallowing the poison that emerged from the churning

of the ocean.

[443] Mahadeva.

[444] Mahadeva.

[445] Mahadeva's name, meaning the hunter.

[446] Mahadeva.

[447] Yudhishthira.

[448] The fire.

[449] Both durva and kusha are sacred sacrificial grasses and the two are sometimes used synonymously. However, kusha seems softer and more sacred than durva.

[450] Indra.

[451] Indra killed two demons named Bala and Vritra.

[452] Because it had rained.

[453] Savita is the sun-god. Savitri's story will be recounted in Section 42. Savitri is not exactly Savita's daughter, but was born as a boon from the sun-god.

[454] Paka is a demon killed by Indra.

[455] Rishya is a type of antelope and *shringa* means horn.

[456] Indra has a thousand eyes.

[457] The god of rain, Indra.

[458] Marking-nuts.

[459] Myrobalans.

[460] Some unidentified fruit, probably harsh to the taste.

[461]*Inguda* is a medicinal tree.

[462] Probably some kind of berry.

[463] The fruit of a kind of fig tree.

[464]*Shala* trees.

[465] Tree with beautiful flowers.

[466] The breasts.

[467] There were anklets.

[468] Earrings.

[469] The ball.

[470] Literally, the king's hermitage.

[471] Indra.

[472] Vibhandaka's wrath.

[473] These are Lomapada's instructions to his warriors.

[474] Champa was the capital of Anga. Anga is the eastern part of Bihar, and east of Munger, there are two villages by the name of Champa.

[475] Shanta went to the hermitage with Rishyashringa.

[476] Indra.

[477] Yudhishthira's name is Ajamidha.

[478] There are different stories about Mudgala. He was both a king and a sage. In some accounts, Mudgala's wife was Indrasena. In other accounts, Indrasena was his daughter-in-law. Indrasena was Narayana's daughter. Thus, Nadayani could also read Narayani, as in some non-Critical texts.

[479] There are stories about Rudra (Shiva) not being offered a share in the sacrifices and about how this was altered later.

[480] Brahma.

[481] As has been mentioned earlier, rasatala is one of the seven nether regions.

[482] The celestial drink, ambrosia.

[483] Yudhishthira.

[484] Parashurama.

[485] Richika.

[486] These are different types of fig trees.

[487] In a different version of the story, the two women were given two separate bowls of charu that they were supposed to eat and they mixed these up.

[488] The knowledge of weapons is *dhanurveda*. More specifically, dhanurveda is the knowledge of archery. Weapons are of four types—*mukta, amukta, muktamukta* and *yantramukta*. Mukta weapons are released, such as a *chakra.* Amukta weapons are not released, such as a sword. Muktamukta weapons can either be released or not released, such as a spear. Yantramukta weapons are released from an implement or machine, such as a missile.

[489] Kartavirya had one thousand arms. Kartavirya also had the name of Arjuna.

[490] Meaning sons.

[491] A vyama is a measure of length. When the arms are extended, it is the distance from the tips of the fingers of one hand to the tips of the fingers of the other. A vyama is thus roughly equal to 2 yards.

[492] The brahmanas. *Khanda* means a piece.

[493] Earlier, the earth was given to the officiating priests.

[494] Janamejaya was Parikshit's son.

[495] It is not clear which feat this refers to. Arjuna's conquests did not take him to the south. This must therefore be a reference to Lomasha's account of Arjuna's exploits in heaven.

[496] Yudhishthira.

[497] Droupadi.

[498] Parashurama. The word son is being used in a loose sense. Parashurama is Jamadagni's son and Richika's grandson.

[499] Meaning Yama.

[500] Meaning Kubera.

[501] The sun-god.

[502] Bhaga also means the sun and the moon. In this context, it means Shiva.

[503] The sun. Literally, the one who creates the day.

[504] Varuna.

[505] Brahma.

[506] Pushan has several meanings—the sun, Indra and Shiva. However, all three have already been separately mentioned.

[507] Balarama.

[508] Yudhishthira.

[509] Shini's grandson is Satyaki.

[510] Arjuna.

[511] The Yadavas.

[512] Vanamali means one who wears a garland of wild flowers and is usually Krishna's epithet. But here, it is being used for Balarama.

[513] Jasmine.

[514] Krishna.

[515] Dhritarashtra.

[516] Dhritarashtra.

[517] The Pandavas. The word son is being used in a loose sense.

[518] Vichitravirya was Dhritarashtra's father.

[519] Bhima's conquest of the east has been described in Section 23 (Volume 2).

[520] Sahadeva's conquest of the south has been described in Section 23 (Volume 2).

Dantakura was the capital of Kalinga and there may be a typo here. Kalinga is not in the south and there is no mention of Dantakura in Section 23 (Volume 2).

521 Referring to Nakula. Nakula's conquest of the west has been described in Section 23 (Volume 2).

522 Droupadi.

523 The text refers to Dharma tangentially. The three objectives of worldly existence (*trivarga*) are dharma, artha and kama and foremost among them is dharma. Instead of saying Dharma, the text says the foremost of trivarga.

524 Dhritarashtra's son, Duryodhana.

525 Sharnga is the name of Krishna's bow.

526 Arjuna. Arjuna also taught Satyaki the art of war.

527 Duryodhana's.

528 Rohini was Balarama's mother.

529 Pradyumna is Krishna's son and this 'your' is being used in a general sense.

530 Since Pradyumna has already been mentioned, this means Samba. Samba was Krishna's son, through Jambavati.

531 It was Pradyumna, not Samba, who was kidnapped by the demon Shambara. Pradyumna was kidnapped when still a child and eventually killed Shambara. This shloka probably belongs earlier, when Pradyumna's valour is being described.

532 Samba, not Pradyumna, seems to have killed Ashvachakra in battle. It is not clear who Ashvachakra was.

533 Pradyumna's son and Krishna's grandson.

534 Yudhishthira had sworn an oath that he would be banished and could not become king until that period was over.

535 Karna.

536 Krishna is usually referred to as Madhava. The Yadavas are known as Madhava because one of their lines was descended from Madhu. Thus Satyaki, and not just Krishna, is also Madhava.

537 Yudhishthira.

538 The Kekaya brothers were divided in the Kurukshetra War, with some on the side of the Pandavas and the others on the side of the Kouravas. By the lord or king of Kekaya one means Vrihatkshatra, the eldest of the Kekaya brothers who fought on the side of the Pandavas. By the lord or king of Chedi one means Dhrishtaketu, Shishupala's son, who was instated on the throne after Shishupala's death.

539 Krishna.

[540] Yudhishthira is now speaking to Satyaki.

[541] Krishna.

[542] Yudhishthira.

[543] Indra.

[544] Another name for Amurtarayasa.

[545] Assisting priests.

[546] Koushika is one of Indra's names.

[547] The Ashvins.

[548] Meaning, someone who is old and is about to die.

[549] His wife.

[550] *Mada* means intoxication, insanity, arrogance.

[551] Pushkara is a specific tirtha and is a proper name. But it also means a body of water in general.

[552] That is, attained salvation. Dhata and Vidhata are both words for the creator. Dhata has the nuance of someone who preserves, while Vidhata has the nuance of someone who arranges.

[553] In the art of telling stories.

[554] Another name for Yuvanashva.

[555] Into the water.

[556] Derived from *mam dhata*, 'the nurse will be me'.

[557] The word used is *kishku*. Kishku is the length of a forearm, that is, one cubit.

[558] This is a reference to Vishnu's vamana (dwarf) avatara, where Vishnu covered the three worlds in his three strides.

[559] Chakra. An emperor is known as *chakravarti*.

[560] A padma is one thousand billion, that is, one trillion.

[561] Indra. Indra showers down rain.

[562] Mandhata killed the king of Gandhara.

[563] This is in the singular. So Somaka is addressing the chief priest.

[564] That is, they have grown old.

[565] The chief priest.

[566] The priest.

[567] Yama, the god of death.

[568] Meaning Yayati, the son of Nahusha.

[569] A tree believed to have fire inside it.

[570] Parashurama.

[571] Richika's son is Jamadagni and Jamadagni's son is Parashurama. The text uses the word 'son' in an extended sense and Parashurama, rather than Jamadagni, is meant.

[572] An ulukhala is a wooden mortar used for cleaning rice.

[573] All of these are spots around Kurukshetra.

[574] Beyond the suggestion that one shouldn't dwell there for more than one night, it is impossible to understand what this means.

[575] Meaning Arjuna.

[576] Meaning Kurukshetra. *Kshetra* means field and Kurukshetra literally means Kuru's field.

[577] Having disappeared into the desert, the Sarasvati reappears in three places further downstream—Chamasodbheda, Shirobheda and Nagobheda.

[578] The Beas.

[579] The story has been recounted in Section 11 (Volume 1).

[580] Kashmir, but written as Kashmira because of the style we have followed.

[581] Meaning Yayati, Nahusha's son.

[582] The Lake Manas or Manasa Sarovar. Mount Kailasha is next to Manasa Sarovar and the reference to Parashurama concerns Kailasha.

[583] Parashurama.

[584] Padma.

[585] Rukmini is Krishna's wife.

[586] Meaning death.

[587] Suparna is one of Garuda's names.

[588] A plantain tree is weak. Therefore, one should not climb it.

[589] Agni. The text uses Havyavahana, one of Agni's names, meaning the bearer of sacrificial offerings.

[590] *Ashta* is eight and *vakra* is bent or crooked, the reference being to a physical deformity.

[591] Bandi was thus a suta or charioteer.

[592] Shvetaketu's father, that is, Uddalaka.

[593] Ashtavakra.

[594] King Janaka and Ashtavakra met each other on the road. Since the king was

travelling along the same road, Ashtavakra seems to have been restrained by a guard or gatekeeper.

595 Ashtavakra spoke to King Janaka. This part is not very smooth. Ashtavakra thereafter speaks to the gatekeeper and the conversation with King Janaka doesn't quite belong. It resumes again later.

596 Brahmanas are being compared to fires and there is no brahmana who is minor.

597 The word used is tata. This means son and is used affectionately for any inferior. Ashtavakra is addressing the gatekeeper, who is an inferior.

598 Indradyumna was Janaka's father.

599 These are Bandi's words.

600 The preceptor.

601 The silk-cotton tree.

602 That is, the number of relatives.

603 This is a quote being ascribed to the sages.

604 Of time. Twenty-four hours in the day, six seasons, twelve months and three hundred and sixty days.

605 Agni or the fire-god has the wind as a charioteer and the two are thunder and lightning, causing fire and originating in fire.

606 This is being addressed to Bandi.

607 The act of conception, the birth and the related rituals and initiation at the time of the thread-bearing ceremony.

608 A reference to the three Vedas recited at the sacrifice, the Atharva Veda not being included.

609 Pressing to extract the soma juice. There are four types of officiating priests —*hotar* (one who recites from the Rig Veda), udgatar (one who recites from the Sama Veda), adhvaryu (one who recites from the Yajur Veda) and brahman (one who recites from the Atharva Veda).

610 The sun, the moon and the stars.

611 Brahmacharya, *garhasthya, vanavasa* and *sannyasa.*

612 This is a completely literal translation. However, the word *go* also means speech and in addition to feet, the word *pada* means one-fourth of a shloka. This may very well have been the intended meaning.

613 The five sacred fires known as *dakshina, garhapatya, ahavaniya, sabhya* and *avasathya.* There are also believed to be five digestive fires in the body.

614 Again, the word used is pada. *Pankti* means any collection of five.

[615] The five daily sacrifices required to be performed by any householder—*adhyana* (studying), *brahma yajna, pitri yajna, deva yajna* and *bhuta yajna*.

[616] Apsaras are believed to have five tufts of hair. We have deviated from the Critical Edition's text here. The Critical Edition leaves it dangling and the line ends abruptly. So we do not know who has five tufts of hair. Other versions mention apsaras.

[617] The five rivers of the Punjab—Shatadru, Vipasha, Iravati, Chandrabhaga and Vitasta.

[618] The five standard organs and the mind.

[619] The third of the twenty-seven nakshatras, the constellation Pleiades, consisting of six stars.

[620] A sadasyka is a rite connected with a soma sacrifice and six such rites are performed on a single day.

[621] The seven types of domestic animals are a cow, a goat, a sheep, a man, a horse, a mule and an ass and the inclusion of a man in listings of domestic animals is interesting. But this list does vary from one text to another. The seven wild animals are a lion, a tiger, a boar, a monkey, a bear, an elephant and a buffalo.

[622]*Chhanda*. The list of seven varies, but the standard list is gayatri, *trishtupa, jagati, anushtupa,* pankti, brihati and *kakupa*.

[623] The saptarshis. The usual list is Marichi, Atri, Angira, Pulastya, Pulaha, Kratu and Vasishtha.

[624] This listing is not immediately clear.

[625] This is probably a reference to coinage or weight. In coinage, shana or *karshapana* is mentioned and *shatamana* (literally, one hundred units) is also mentioned. This may refer to the conversion between shana and shatamana.

[626] Sharabha is mythical and has evolved over time. Sharabha has eight legs, lives in the mountains, slays lions and lives on raw flesh. In later versions, Sharabha is also described as an incarnation of Shiva's and in that form, Shiva tamed Vishnu's half-man and half-lion (narasimha) incarnation.

[627] The numerals 1 to 9.

[628] There is a problem in translating this. Does this mean there are ten stages in life and does each of these stages refer to a decade? A typo is more likely. The text should probably read *disha* rather than *dasha*. In that case, the ten directions are meant. Some non-Critical versions do read disha.

[629] This is difficult to understand. The Dasherakas, Dashas and Dasharnas are all tribes or clans of people mentioned in the Mahabharata. Perhaps this means that each of these tribes or clans were further subdivided into ten subgroups.

[630] Ekadashi is observed on the eleventh lunar day.

[631] The meaning is unclear.

[632] Dvipa.

[633] The meaning is unclear.

[634] Jataveda is one of Agni's ephithets. Jataveda means one who knows the Vedas and is also generally used for someone who knows.

[635] Shleshmataki is a kind of tree with bitter fruit. Has Bandi been weakened because of eating this fruit?

[636] Kahoda will be resurrected.

[637] The name of a river.

[638] Bharata, the ancestor of the Bharata lineage. Although written in the translation as Bharata, the descendants are Bhaarata.

[639] Because Indra had killed the brahmana Vritra.

[640] Bharadvaja.

[641] Koushika is one of Indra's epithets.

[642] There are no quotation marks in the text. But we have inserted them, as this seems to be what the gods told Valadhi.

[643] That is, as long as the mountains were around, the son would not die.

[644] Madhava is another name for the month of Vaishakha.

[645] Raibhya's.

[646] The daughter-in-law.

[647] A kritya is a female deity, worshipped for magical and destructive purposes.

[648]*Kamandalu.*

[649] The kritya.

[650] The guard remained seated and did not stand up on seeing Bharadvaja.

[651] Because Yavakrita's kamandalu had been stolen, he could not clean himself.

[652] A yatudhana is an evil spirit or demon.

[653] The word used is Suparna. Suparna is one of Garuda's names, though the text uses Suparna in the plural. Therefore, these are semi-divine birds, more than ordinary birds.

[654] Lomasha is reciting this invocation to Ganga.

[655] Ajamidha was a common ancestor of the Kouravas and the Pandavas.

[656] Referring to Lomasha's nervousness.

[657] The word used is tata, which can affectionately be used for anyone who is

younger or inferior.

[658] Shvetavahana is literally one whose transport (vahana) is white (*shveta*) meaning one whose horses are white. Arjuna's horses are white and Shvetavahana is one of Arjuna's names.

[659] Nakula and Sahadeva.

[660] Droupadi is presumably speaking to Bhima. But it could be Yudhishthira too.

[661] Kiratas, tanganas and kunindas are all mountain-dwelling hunter races.

[662] That is, when the sun could be clearly seen.

[663] Arjuna's absence.

[664] Referring to Arjuna. Yajnaseni is Droupadi's name.

[665] Arjuna's name.

[666] Indra.

[667] Balarama.

[668] Sahadeva was in charge of carrying the sacred fire.

[669] Yudhishthira.

[670] Calloused from wielding bows.

[671] Meaning Droupadi.

[672] As will be clear, other rakshasas had come to help Ghatotkacha.

[673] Other rakshasas.

[674] Barbarians, those who do not speak Sanskrit.

[675] Badari is a jujube tree. The hermitage of Badari is so named because a giant badari tree stood there.

[676] The text says *kamala* and *utpala*. Kamala is lotus in general, while utpala is either a blue lotus or a lily.

[677] Bhima was the wind-god's son.

[678] Eight elephants guard the eight cardinal points.

[679] To search for Bhima.

[680] Garuda is the king of the birds.

[681] A kind of deer.

[682] Both Hanuman and Bhima were sons of Vayu or the wind-god, though from different mothers. Hanuman was the older of the two.

[683]*Nirguna*, or without qualities. The paramatman is synonymous with the brahman.

[684] The use of 'Him' shouldn't suggest there is a gender in the Sanskrit. There isn't.

But without using 'Him', there are difficulties in translation.

[685] Indra's weapon is vajra, but here the intention is metaphorical. The word used is *ayudha*, which means weapon. A rainbow is called Indra's bow and the metaphor is of a rainbow.

[686] The word used is *kshetra*, best translated as field. Kesari was a chief of the monkeys and was married to Anjana. Thus, Anjana is Kesari's field or kshetra. However, Hanuman was the son of Vayu and Anjana, not Kesari and Anjana.

[687] Sugriva was Vali's younger brother.

[688] Dasharatha's son.

[689] On Ravana's instructions, Maricha adopted the form of a deer.

[690] Sugriva.

[691] This vulture, or giant bird, was named Sampati.

[692] In the kingdom in Ayodhya.

[693] The word tata is affectionately used for anyone who is inferior or younger.

[694] The four eras (yuga) are satya (or krita), treta, dvapara and kali. The incidents of the Ramayana occurred in treta yuga and those of the Mahabharata in dvapara yuga. Dharma decays as one moves down these eras.

[695] The word krita has several meanings and one meaning is done or accomplished. The sense is that deeds were accomplished in krita yuga.

[696] Dharma has four feet (pada) in krita yuga, three in treta, two in dvapara and one in kali. The face of a dice with four spots is also called krita, with three treta, with two dvapara and with one kali.

[697] The three qualities (*guna*) are *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*. These were irrelevant in krita yuga.

[698] Narayana or Vishnu.

[699] In a desire for the fruits of these deeds.

[700] Pavana or Vayu is the wind-god and Bhima was his son.

[701] Marut is another name for Pavana or Vayu and Hanuman was the wind-god's son too.

[702] Rama is descended from Raghu's lineage and Raghava is one of Rama's names.

[703] We have translated Sougandhika as a proper name. *Sougandhika* means something that is extremely fragrant and might be an adjective too.

[704] The lord of riches is Kubera.

[705] The word used is tata, applied affectionately to any inferior or junior.

[706] Brihaspati is the preceptor of the gods and Ushanas (Shukra) is the preceptor of the demons.

[707] The word used is dvija. Though sometimes applied to brahmanas, this is also used for the first three varnas—brahmanas, kshatriyas and vaishyas. In the given context, this broader meaning seems to be indicated.

[708] Accepting gifts.

[709] Students in the brahmacharya stage.

[710] Sama is conciliation or pacification, dana is the giving of gifts or bribery, danda is punishment and bheda is the creation of dissension and strife (among enemies).

[711] Vijaya is Arjuna's name. Hanuman was perched on Arjuna's flagstaff at the time of battle.

[712] Hanuman's.

[713] That is, when it was afternoon.

[714] Type of duck.

[715] The ruddy goose.

[716]*Vaidurya.*

[717] The ruddy goose.

[718] Vaishravana is Vishrava's son and is Kubera's name.

[719] Kubera.

[720] Yudhishthira.

[721] Vinata's son is Garuda.

[722] The rakshasas.

[723] The text says river here, rather than pond.

[1] Ghatotkacha.

[2] Droupadi.

[3] Havya is oblations offered to the gods, kavya is oblations offered to the ancestors.

[4] Jatasura.

[5] Bhima was the son of the wind-god, Pavana or Vayu.

[6] Indra.

[7] Baka and Hidimba are rakshasas who were killed by Bhima earlier.

[8] Threw down Yudhishthira, Nakula and Droupadi.

[9] Bala was a demon killed by Indra. The text should actually say Bala, not Bali.

[10] Nakula and Sahadeva.

[11] Addressing Yudhishthira.

[12] The Vali and Sugriva story is from the Ramayana, though the Mahabharata also mentions it, such as in Section 33.

[1] Yudhishthira.

[2] Jaya and Vijaya are Arjuna's names. Bibhatsu is also one of Arjuna's names, as is Gandivadhanva, the one with the Gandiva as his bow.

[3] Referring to Arjuna.

[4] Referring to Yudhishthira.

[5] The brahmanas and ascetics spoke these words.

[6] Ghatotkacha.

[7] Vrishaparva.

[8] Sharabha has many meanings—young elephant, camel. It is also a mythical animal with eight legs, believed to be stronger than a lion. In this context, one probably means the mythical animal.

[9] The name of Indra's pleasure garden.

[10]*Amrataka.*

[11] Kind of tree.

[12] Kind of tree.

[13] Kind of tree.

[14]*Bijapurakas*.

[15]*Likuchas*.

[16]*Mochas*.

[17] The critical edition's text says *amravetasa*, which doesn't sound right. It should probably be *amlavetasa*, that is, tamarind.

[18] Kind of tree.

[19] Kshoudra is another name for the champaka tree.

[20]*Nipa* is another name for the *kadamba* tree.

[21] Tree sacred to Shiva.

[22]*Kapitthas*.

[23]*Jambus*.

[24] More a plant than a tree.

[25] Plakshas.

[26] Kind of tree.

[27]*Vatas*.

[28]*Ashvatthas*.

[29] Tree difficult to identify, but must have been milky-white in colour.

[30]*Bhallatakas*.

[31]*Amalakas*.

[32] Type of myrobalan.

[33] Type of myrobalan.

[34] Medicinal tree.

[35] Kind of tree.

[36] Name of a tree.

[37] Tree with yellow and fragrant flowers.

[38] Tree with red flowers.

[39] Flowering plant. Ketakas are mentioned twice.

[40] Tree with fragrant flowers. *Bakula*s are mentioned twice.

[41] Flowering tree also known as *nagakeshara*.

[42] Name of a tree.

[43] Tree whose flowers have no smell.

[44] Red trumpet flower.

[45] Name of a tree.

[46]*Mandara*s.

[47]*Indivara*s.

[48] Celestial tree, though the coral tree is also called parijata.

[49] Name of a tree.

[50]*Devadaru*s. Literally, the tree of the gods.

[51] Tall tree.

[52]*Tala*s.

[53] Tree with dark bark.

[54] Tree, also known as *piyala*.

[55]*Shalmali*s.

[56] Tree with red blossoms.

[57] Tree with red blossoms. They are mentioned twice.

[58] Name of a tree.

[59] The critical edition says *taralas*. But there is no obvious tree called tarala. This should probably be sarala, which is a tall and straight species of pine.

[60] Bird, like a partridge.

[61] *Shatapatras*.

[62] *Bhringarajas*.

[63] *Shukas*.

[64] *Kalavinkas*.

[65] Kind of pigeon.

[66] *Jivas*, birds in general.

[67] *Jivakas*.

[68] Clearly a bird, but with no obvious identification.

[69] Kind of bird believed to feed on raindrops.

[70] *Kumudas*.

[71] *Pundarikas*.

[72] *Kokanadas*.

[73] Utpalas.

[74] Kahlaras.

[75] Kamalas.

[76] *Kadamba*. Geese are *kaadamba*, though in our system we have been writing it as kadamba. The critical edition says kadamba, not kaadamba. If kadamba is the right reading, we are talking about a kind of tree. But given the context, geese is more appropriate, so there is a typo in the text of the critical edition.

[77] Chakravakas.

[78] Karandavas.

[79] A diving aquatic bird.

[80] The trees seemed to be wearing crowns.

[81] Manmatha is the god of love.

[82] A kind of amaranth tree.

[83] Kama is the god of love.

[84] A kind of tree with beautiful flowers. Tilaka is also a mark made on the forehead.

[85] Ananga is the god of love. Literally, the word *ananga* means one without a body and there is a story about how the god of love lost his body because of Shiva's rage.

[86] Kind of bird.

[87] Though never made clear, Arshtishena might be Devapi, Shantanu's elder brother, who had resorted to the forest.

[88] Yudhishthira.

[89] This world and the next.

[90] The junction between the fifteenth day of a lunar fortnight and the first day of the next lunar fortnight.

[91] Suparnas.

[92] Type of musical instrument.

[93] Kubera, the lord of riches. Kubera is the son of Vishrava and is therefore known as Vaishravana. Kubera is described as Naravahana, because he has a man (nara) as his mount or vehicle (vahana).

[94] The word used is tata, affectionately used for anyone who is younger or junior.

[95] Famous gandharva.

[96] Arshtishena.

[97] Probably arrows not tipped with poison.

[98] Arjuna. The story of the burning of the Khandava forest has been recounted in Section 19 (Volume 2). Vasava is one of Indra's names.

[99] Maya is the power of creating delusions. Rakshasas resort to maya.

[100] Shatakratu is one of Indra's names and means the performer of one hundred (shata) sacrifices (kratu).

[101] A conch shell has three lines. A neck marked with three lines, like a conch shell, is believed to bring good fortune.

[102] A lion.

[103] The southern direction is the direction of death and it is also a direction frequented by demons.

[104] Arrows had different names, classified according to the arrow's head and the shaft. This one was *vatsadanta*, *vatsa* meaning calf and *danta* meaning teeth, a reference to the arrow's tip or head.

[105] The word used is kritya, meaning a she-demon or a malevolent goddess.

[106] The rakshasas and other demons are those who roam (*chara*) in the night (*nisha*) and are known as *nishacharas*.

[107] Yudhishthira.

[108] There is some inconsistency, since Droupadi had herself sent Bhima.

[109] Indra.

[110] The lords (*pala*) of the worlds (*loka*) are eight in number—Indra, Vahni (Agni), Yama, Nairrita, Varuna, Maruta, Kubera and Isha (Ishana). Sometimes, Vayu is listed instead of Indra. However, since the reference here seems to be to four lokapalas, one

probably means Indra, Agni, Varuna and Yama.

[111] Yudhishthira and Bhima respectively.

[112] Class of demons who are prone to (*vasha*) anger (*krodha*).

[113] The killing of Maniman.

[114] The word used is Rajaraja. The word raja has several meanings, a yaksha being one of them. So Rajaraja is the king of the yakshas, or Kubera.

[115] An *ayuta* is ten thousand and there were one thousand ayuta yakshas.

[116] The yakshas.

[117] Kubera.

[118] Controlling their anger.

[119] Pushpaka is Kubera's celestial chariot or vehicle (vimana).

[120] The architect of the gods.

[121] The yakshas and the rakshasas.

[122] Yudhishthira.

[123] The word used is tata.

[124] Padma is a trillion. Mahapadma isn't specific, but is simply a very large number.

[125] Agastya.

[126] The dark lunar fortnight (Krishna paksha) is referred to as the first lunar fortnight.

[127] This means the yakshas. Alaka is Kubera's capital.

[128] The word used is tata.

[129] Gandivadhanva means the wielder of the Gandiva and is one of Arjuna's name. Jishnu, Gudakesha and Dhananjaya are also Arjuna's names. In this passage, the word Partha is being used for both Yudhishthira and Arjuna, since both are Pritha's (Kunti's) sons.

[130] Airavata is Indra's elephant.

[131] Tata.

[132]*Asta* means sunset and Asta is also the name of the western mountain behind which, the sun is believed to set.

[133]*Sadas*.

[134] Prajapati means the lord of all beings. In this context, it means Brahma.

[135] Brahma had seven sons through his mental powers. While the list varies, a standard one is Marichi, Atri, Angiras, Pulastya, Pulaha, Kratu and Daksha.

136 Tata.

137 The list of the seven great rishis (saptarshi) varies. Indeed, the list is believed to change from one era to another. Identified with the constellation of the Great Bear (Ursa Majoris), the saptarshi list is Kratu, Pulaha, Pulastya, Atri, Angiras, Vasishtha and Bhrigu (alternatively, Marichi).

138 Brahma.

139 They are not reborn.

140 The sun-god.

141 The sun circumambulates Mount Meru.

142 The moon.

143*Dakshinayana* (southern course), the winter solstice, when the sun moves south of the equator.

144*Kala* is a small measure of time, but that measure is not consistently defined. In terms of astronomy, kala is 1/60th of a degree, that is, a minute. A *kashtha* is 1/30th of a kala.

145 Arjuna's name. Literally, the one with a diadem on his head.

146 Arjuna's horses were white.

147 Indra's charioteer.

148 Ajatashatru is one of Yudhishthira's names.

149 Yudhishthira.

150 Indra killed a demon named Namuchi. Diti's sons are daityas or demons.

151 Droupadi. Sutasoma was the son of Arjuna and Droupadi.

152 Entry is *pravesha* and this is what the critical edition says. Some other versions say *pravasa*, which means residence. While describing the entry into heaven is possible, description of the residence in heaven is more likely.

153 The critical edition excises a shloka that says night was over.

154 Yudhishthira and Indra respectively.

155 Yudhishthira.

156 Yudhishthira.

157 The wielder of the pinaka is Shiva.

158 Shaishira can be either a proper name or an adjective. If it is an adjective, it means the cold mountatin.

159 The first day of the fifth month.

160 Kiratas are hunters, typically inhabiting mountainous regions.

[161] The boar.

[162] Depending on the tips and the shafts, arrows had different names and it is difficult to pin these down more precisely. For example, sthunakarna probably meant an arrow that was stocky at the shaft, ayojala probably had iron in the head, sharavarsha simply means a shower of arrows, sharolbana has the same meaning, shailastra must have had iron in the head and ashmavarsha also must have had iron in the tip.

[163] Powerful, magical and divine weapon.

[164] Shiva has a bull (vrisha) on his banner (dhvaja) and is known as Vrishadhvaja.

[165] A pinaka can be either a trident or a bow. Shiva is the wielder of the pinaka.

[166]*Shula* (trident).

[167] Shiva's name.

[168] Shiva's name, meaning the one with three eyes.

[169] Roudra is another name for the pashupata weapon. Pashupati and Rudra are Shiva's names.

[170] Shiva's.

[171] Each *manvantara* (era) is presided over by a sovereign known as Manu. It is because humans are descended from Manu that they are known as *manava*. There are fourteen manvantaras and fourteen Manus to preside over them. The present manvantara is the seventh and the Manu who presides over this is known as Vaivasvata, because he was born from the sun (Vivasvat).

[172] Maruts are gods of the wind and Indra's companions. Indra is therefore known as Marutvan. Shachi is his consort.

[173] Savyasachi is one of Arjuna's names and means one who is left-handed.

[174] There is an inconsistency, because Arjuna actually obtained those weapons in heaven.

[175] Indra was the brahmana and Indra would show himself to Arjuna in heaven.

[176] Brahma.

[177] In this context, a class of demons.

[178] Vishvavasu is the name of the king of the gandharvas.

[179] Harivahana is Indra's epithet. Literally, this means someone whose horses (means of transport) are tawny.

[180] The five types of weapons are mukta (those that are released from the hand, like a chakra), amukta (those that are never released, like a sword), muktamukta (those that can be released or not released, like a spear), yantramukta (those that are released from

an implement, like an arrow) and mantramukta (magical weapons unleashed with incantations). These are categories of weapons. It is difficult to pinpoint the ten. In all probability, that number refers to weapons by name, rather than types. Shula (spear), *tomara* (club), *gada* (mace), parashu (battleaxe), *mudgara* (hammer), vajra, chakra, *kshepini* (sling), *asi* (sling) and *bhindipala* (javelin) might be such a possible list.

181 These five techniques are especially important for *divyastras*, that is, divine or magical weapons. Atonement is necessary if such a magical weapon has been discharged inappropriately, at the wrong person.

182 Prayuta is a million, arbuda is one hundred million.

183 The gods told Arjuna this.

184 The name of the conch shell.

185 Timingila is a fish that devours whales (*timi*). The text has the word timingila twice, but we have retained it in the translation only once. A makara is a mythical creature, translated very loosely as a crocodile.

186 Weapons capable of killing one hundred at a time.

187 Famous battle between the gods and the demons.

188 Ten arrows.

189 Powers of delusion.

190 Of chariots or carts.

191 Vishoshana means something that dries up.

192 Salila means water.

193 Shaila is something that is made out of rock.

194 There were several demons named Shambara. One of them was killed by Indra.

195 For the killing of Virochana's son. Virochana's son was the demon named Bali.

196 Brahma.

197 The demons.

198 Brahma.

199 Arjuna is Indra's son.

200 Puloma is a demon who is Indra's father-in-law. Indra's wife Shachi is Puloma's daughter. The Poulamas are demons. The Kalakeyas are demons too.

201 Brahma.

202 Literally, a city (*pura*) made of gold (*hiranya*).

203*Nalikas*, weapons not easy to identify. They could be arrows, spears or darts. All one knows is that they were hollow.

[204] *Bhallas*, weapons that were hurled.

[205] That is, Arjuna resorted to divine weapons.

[206] This was the weapon personified.

[207] Shiva.

[208] Animal that cannot be identified.

[209] Makaras.

[210] Evil spirit, kind of demon.

[211] Tripura was a city of the demons and was destroyed by Shiva.

[212] The word used is *kala,* which is a small measure. Sixteen kalas make up a larger measure.

[213] Sthanu is Shiva's name. The goddess is Uma, Shiva's consort.

[214] The sun.

[215] In principle, twice-born can mean brahmanas, kshatriyas or vaishyas, but commonly means brahmanas.

[216] Brahma.

[217] Yudhishthira.

[218] Janamejaya.

[1] Arjuna's name, literally the one with a diadem on his head.

[2] That is, they were comfortable and lacked nothing.

[3] The king is Yudhishthira, Vayu's intrepid son is Bhima, Jishnu is Arjuna and the twins are Nakula and Sahadeva. Bhima is doing the speaking.

[4] The Pandavas were exiled for twelve years in the forest and one year of life incognito. Only eleven years have passed, so there is no need to resort yet to a life that is incognito. That happens in Virata Parva. Essentially, Bhima wants them to move elsewhere. However, there is also a mention of one more year of life incognito and the numbers don't add up. If only one year of incognito life is left, we should immediately jump to Virata Parva. But in that case, there is no time for the incidents that occur between now and Virata Parva.

[5] Suparna is Garuda and Vishnu (Krishna) has Garuda on his banner. Shini's grandson is Balarama, though this is not to be interpreted in the narrow sense of a grandson. Shini was a common ancestor of the Yadavas, further up the line than a grandfather.

[6] Foremost among the Shinis is probably a reference to Satyaki.

[7] Kubera is Vaishravana.

[8] Lomasha.

[9] Eight elephants guard the eight cardinal directions.

[10] In the mountains and on their way to Vrishaparva's hermitage.

[11] Chinese.

[12] Alternatively, *tusharas*, identified with Turkmenistan or the Turkistan region of Afghanistan.

[13] Identified with the Gilgit region of Kashmir.

[14] Identified as the region between Vitasta (Beas) and Chandrabhaga (Chenab).

[15] Identified with Uttarakhand and the southern parts of Himachal Pradesh.

[16] Vishoka is Bhima's charioteer. Indrasena is Yudhishthira's charioteer.

[17] The river Yamuna originates in the Yamunotri glacier, on the slopes of the Banderpooch peaks. Mount Yamuna probably means this place.

[18] Vishakha is the sixteenth star (nakshatra) and there is clearly an astronomical allusion here.

[19] The name of Kubera's pleasure garden.

[20] The serpent.

[21] Fig trees.

[22] Also known as *bibhitakas*, *Terminalia belerica.*

[23] The herb *Tecomella undulate*.

[24] Acorns.

[25] Tree with jujube berries.

[26] Acacia.

[27] Another variety of acacia or mimosa.

[28]*Aegle marmelos*, tree sacred to Shiva.

[29]*Balanites roxburghii.*

[30]*Salvadora oleoides*.

[31] Large tree, *Prosopis spicigera.*

[32] Thorny plant eaten by camels, *Capparis aphylla.*

[33] Kubera was Vishrava's son and Pulastya's grandson.

[34] Herons.

[35] Pheasants.

[36] A shrike or a thrush.

[37] Ducks.

[38] Species of pine. Devadaru literally means tree of the gods.

[39] Kaliyaka is the barberry or turmeric tree.

[40] Meaning that the tips of the arrows did not have poison in them.

[41] Nahusha's story is left implicit. After killing Vritra, Indra suffered from guilt and went into hiding. The throne of the king of the gods was empty and Nahusha was temporarily appointed Indra. But he insulted the brahmanas by making them carry him. He was then cursed by Agastya that he would become a serpent.

[42] Agastya.

[43] The other brahmanas who were with Agastya.

[44] The south is the direction of Yama, death, ghosts and demons.

[45]*Vartika.*

[46] Yudhishthira's.

[47] Bhima.

[48] This is the lunar dynasty, originating with Soma or Chandra, the moon. Soma's son was Budha, Budha's son was Pururava, Pururava's son was Ayu and Ayu's son was Nahusha. So Nahusha was fifth in the line.

[49] Meaning, the sixth day. The boa eats on every sixth day.

[50] Happiness and unhappiness.

[51] That is the right to sacrifice is based on conduct, and not on varna.

[52] The word Savitri means several things. It is a sacred mantra from the Rig Veda. It is also the ceremony of investiture with the sacred thread. The sense is that at the time of birth, the mother is more important than the father, and is the equivalent of the sacred thread ceremony.

[53] Each manvantara (era) is presided over by a sovereign known as Manu. It is because humans are descended from Manu that they are known as manava. There are fourteen manvantaras and fourteen Manus to preside over them. The present manvantara is the seventh and the Manu who presides over this is known as Vaivasvata, because he was born from the sun (Vivasvat). Svayambhuva Manu is the first, thus known because he created himself.

[54] The six Vedangas are *shiksha* (articulation and pronunciation), chhanda (prosody), *vyakarana* (grammar), *nirukta* (etymology), *jyotisha* (astronomy) and *kalpa* (rituals).

[55] The word used is tata, applied affectionately to anyone younger or junior.

[56] The soul.

[57] Yudhishthira.

[58] Agastya, in the form of destiny.

[59] The word used is *vyala*, which means both predator and serpent.

[1] Stokaka is another name for the chataka bird, believed to live on drops of rain.

[2] *Kumuda.*

[3] Pundarika.

[4] The kadamba tree.

[5] Parvasandhi is the junction between the fifteenth day of a lunar fortnight and the first day of the next lunar fortnight. Thus, the night of the full moon in Kartika arrived.

[6] Droupadi.

[7] Krishna's name. Hari is also Krishna's name, as is Keshava.

[8] The names of Krishna's horses.

[9] Satyabhama is Krishna's third wife. Maghavan is Indra. Indra's consort is Shachi. Shachi is Puloma's daughter, thus known as Poulami. Krishna's mother is Devaki.

[10] Gudakesha and Phalguna are Arjuna's names. Yudhishthira and Bhima were senior in age to Krishna and thus, warranted homage.

[11] Krishna. In general, Dasharha is a term for the Yadavas.

[12] Dhoumya.

[13] Krishna's name. Literally, the one with eyes like a lotus.

[14] By the illustrious lord, one means Shiva. Guha is Kartikeya's name and Kartikeya is Shiva's son. The imagery is of Shiva being united with Kartikeya.

[15] Arjuna is the one with the diadem on his head. Because of the diadem on his head, Arjuna is known as Kiriti. Gada is Krishna's younger brother.

[16] Krishna is Madhu's slayer and one of Krishna's names is Madhusudana.

[17] Arjuna.

[18] Droupadi. Droupadi's name is Krishna. This should really be written as Krishnaa, to avoid confusion with Krishna. But we have written Droupadi as Krishna, to keep it simple. From the context, it should be clear whether Krishna or Droupadi is meant.

[19] Yudhishthira.

[20] The forest of the Kurus, a term for Kurukshetra.

[21] Drupada, Droupadi's father.

[22] Anarta was the kingdom of the Yadavas in the northern parts of Gujarat.

[23] The Vrishnis were a line of the Yadavas.

[24] They are content with their state.

[25] Pradyumna is the son of Krishna and Rukmini. Aniruddha is Pradyumna's son and Krishna's grandson. Bhanu is the son of Krishna and Satyabhama. This Sunitha is the son of Krishna and Rukmini.

[26] Lines of the Yadavas.

[27] Madhu was an ancestor of the Yadavas. So Madhus is another term for the Yadavas.

[28] Halayudha is the one with a plough (hala) for his weapon (ayudha) and is Balarama's name.

[29] Duryodhana.

[30] Soubha's lord or king was Shalva and the story of Krishna's destruction of Soubha and Shalva has been recounted in Section 31 (Volume 2).

[31] Of the enemy.

[32] Another name for Hastinapura.

[33] Descendant of the Vrishni lineage, Krishna.

[34] Padya and arghya are offered to a guest. The former is water for washing the feet and the latter is a gift.

[35] Yudhishthira.

[36] Markandeya was descended from Bhrigu's lineage and is therefore addressed as Bhargava.

[37] Brahma.

[38] Metaphorically. One had to go through the cycle of rebirth.

[39] The new form.

[40] The word used is tata, affectionately used for anyone who is younger or junior.

[41] That is, seeing the dead body.

[42] Tarkshya is a name for both Garuda, and Garuda's father too. But here, Tarkshya means the sage who was descended from Kashyapa. Arishtanemi was one of Tarkshya's names.

[43] Tarkshya's son.

[44] Tarkshya.

[45] Goutama.

[46] Indra.

[47] Vainya.

[48] Sadasyas.

[49] Shakra is Indra, Shukra is the preceptor of the demons and Brihaspati is the preceptor of the gods.

[50] Ruler.

[51] The word shyama usually means dark, which makes no sense here. Shyama has a secondary meaning of a woman who has not borne children. That meaning seems more appropriate.

[52] Bhara is a measure of weight.

[53] Here means, on this earth.

[54] A shrotriya is a brahmana learned in the sacred texts, specifically the Vedas.

[55] Food left over after offerings to gods, ancestors, brahmanas and guests.

[56] Goloka, Krishna's world.

[57] Lakshmi, the goddess of wealth.

[58] This is a metaphor for the sacrifice and its offerings.

[59] Payasa is a sweet dish made from milk and rice.

[60] Yudhishthira.

[61] The sun-god.

[62] Vishala is the name of a jujube tree in Badari or Badarikashrama.

[63] A river believed to flow from the Malaya mountains.

[64] The word used is tata. While it does mean father, it is affectionately used for anyone who is senior.

[65] The place where the boat (*nau*) was tied (*bandhana*).

[66] Parameshthi means the supreme lord and is an epithet used for Brahma, Vishnu, Shiva, and even Agni and Garuda.

[67] Brahma.

[68] Those born from wombs, those born from eggs, vegetables and plants and those born from sweat (insects).

[69] This is a reference to Vishnu, asleep on the lotus.

[70] Brahma.

[71] Vishnu.

[72] The text uses both the words *karta* and *vikarta*. It is difficult to distinguish between them. Hence, karta has been translated as creator and vikarta as special creator.

[73] The four yugas or eras are krita (or satya), treta, dvapara and kali. Between two eras, there is an intermediary period of conjunction (sandhya).

[74] The word used is tata.

[75] Mlecchas are barbarians, those who do not speak Sanskrit.

[76] Shakas are identified as Scythians and Yavanas as Greeks. Pulindas are uncivilized

mountainous tribes. Kambojas lived in the Hindu Kush region. Ournikas are those who earned a living off wool. Abhiras are a tribe.

77 Bho is used when addressing an inferior and arya is used when addressing a superior. The sense is that shudras should be saying 'arya' and brahmanas should be saying 'bho'.

78 Presumably indicative of a lot of fighting.

79 Fraudulently pretending to be hermits.

80 Indra. Indra killed a demon named Paka.

81 One of Brahma's days.

82 Makara.

83 Vishnu.

84 The flower of flax, *Linum usitatissimum*. Krishna's complexion is often likened to this flower.

85 Vishnu bears the srivatsa mark (or curl) on his chest. This is the place where Lakshmi resides.

86 The word used is tata.

87 Markandeya was born in Bhrigu's lineage.

88 The word used in the text is *vrishala*. While this means shudra, it also means outcast. Servitude is towards a dvija, or twice-born. While dvija does mean brahmana, it is a term that can be applied to all the three upper varnas.

89 The word used is tata.

90 The word *ayana* means abode or path.

91 Kubera.

92*Dhata* and *vidhata* respectively.

93 Shesha naga holds up the earth.

94 This is a reference to Vishnu's boar (varaha) incarnation.

95 The vadava (or *badava*) fire is a submarine fire. It has the shape of a collection of mares.

96 Evil, the negation of dharma.

97 Because only one quarter of dharma remains in kali yuga.

98 This is a reference to Vishnu's dwarf (vamana) incarnation, when he covered the three worlds with three strides.

99 Brahma.

100 The word used is tata.

[101] A term used for Krishna and for the Yadavas.

[102] Dharma has four feet (or quarters) in krita yuga, three in dvapara, two in treta and one in kali. Hence the analogy of the bull.

[103] In kali yuga.

[104] We have deliberately not translated linga, since it can mean different things. It can mean a religious mark, it can mean gender, it can be a mark for Shiva, it can mean the idol of a god, it can mean proof used in evidence. Any of these might be in vain.

[105] More accurately, vrishalas.

[106]*Edukas*. This is probably a reference to Buddhist stupas, where there were relic chambers.

[107] Vrishalas.

[108] The headless torso is Rahu. Rahu eclipses the sun. Rahu is headless because Vishnu sliced the head off.

[109] Indra.

[110] The eighth of the twenty-seven nakshatras, also known as Pushya.

[111] Kalki is Vishnu's tenth incarnation.

[112] The new yuga.

[113] Brahma.

[114] As signs of order having been restored. The black antelope skins are symbolic of brahmanas, while the weapons are symbolic of kshatriyas.

[115] Dasyus are outcasts, bandits, evil demons and the enemies of gods and men.

[116] Teaching, studying, sacrifices, acting as priests at sacrifices, donating and receiving gifts.

[117] Purana is any old account. But specifically, there are sacred texts known as the Puranas. Vayu is the wind-god. While this may be a reference to any old account told by Vayu, it is more likely to be a specific reference to the *Vayu Purana*, one of those sacred texts.

[118] Though not explicit, this may mean that Markandeya, though an immortal, has been through the cycle of death and rebirth several times.

[119] The word used is tata.

[120] That is, the other Pandavas. Sharnga is the name of Krishna's bow.

[121] The text doesn't mention this explicitly. But the quotes that follow are clearly in Markandeya's words.

[122] As fodder.

[123] A kind of creeper that wraps itself around mango trees. Known as *madhavi, kusari* or *kasturamogara.*

[124] Vedic chants, the implication being that a brahmana has no need of a mount.

[125] Evil spirit, kind of demon,

[126] As the subsequent sentences show, this means that Indradyumna no longer knows who he is.

[127] This is odd. The text says *rasayanika*, which cannot be translated as anything other than chemists or alchemists. But this doesn't make a great deal of sense. Perhaps it should read *vasayanika*, meaning those who have fixed abodes. Since hermits don't have fixed abodes and are not vasayanikas, they are unlikely to recognize anyone, since they move around from one place to another.

[128] Both Markandeya and the owl.

[129] That is, Indradyumna performed one thousand sacrifices.

[130] King Nriga inadvertently donated the same cow to two brahmanas. He was cursed and became a lizard that lived in a well. Krishna rescued him from this curse.

[131] The word used is tata.

[132]*Mara* means to kill. Dhundhumara is the one who slays Dhundhu.

[133] Shravasti or Sravasti is in Uttar Pradesh.

[134] Madhu and Kaitabha were demons killed by Vishnu.

[135] Vishnu's jewel that emerged from the churning of the ocean.

[136] That is, uncovered by the water.

[137] Having placed the demons on his thigh.

[138] Madhu and Kaitabha.

[139] Brahma's.

[140] This story has been told in Section 33.

[141] Kumbhakarna was Ravana's brother, who slept for six months. While this is a story from the Ramayana, it will be briefly retold in Section 42.

[142] Parva, the day of the new moon or the full moon.

[143] This question is being asked by Yudhishthira.

[144] The word used is tata.

[145] There is a problem with the Critical edition's text here. As it stands, the text should be translated as 'some hold the mother to be equal …' This doesn't quite fit. The translation given is in accordance with what non-Critical versions state.

[146] The Angas mean the six Vedangas of shiksha (articulation and pronunciation),

chhanda (prosody), vyakarana (grammar), nirukta (etymology), jyotisha (astronomy) and kalpa (rituals). The Upanishads are sacred texts known as Vedanta, the last part of the Vedas.

147 Brihaspati had cursed the ocean.

148 Dandaka was born in the Ikshvaku lineage. He coveted Bhargava's daughter and was cursed by Bhargava that his kingdom would become a wasteland. This is Dandaka Aranya or Dandaka forest.

149 This story has been told in Section 33.

150 Shrutis are sacred texts that have been revealed. They are of divine origin and have no author. The core consists of the Vedas and the Vedanta literature.

151 The king of Mithila.

152 Dharma *setu*. The word setu also means an institution.

153 The hunter.

154 The word used is tata.

155 The three forms of knowledge are the first three Vedas, excluding the Atharva Veda. The text uses the expression *danda niti*, which can loosely be translated as governance.

156 The Dharmashastras are sacred texts that deal with customs, practices, law and ethical conduct. They belong to the *smriti* tradition, that is, they have specific authors.

157 The words that follow are by the hunter.

158 Karma is action, the fruits of that action and also the consequent destiny.

159 This story has been told in Section 33.

160 Rantideva was a king of the lunar dynasty, known for his generosity.

161 Seasonal festivals after every four months, held in the months of Kartika, Phalguna and Ashada.

162 This story has been told in Section 11 (Volume 1).

163 Kind of rice.

164 The following words are the hunter speaking.

165 That is, is born as inferior species.

166 The three qualities (guna) are sattva, rajas and tamas.

167 The five elements, the five senses and the seven properties.

168 To the list of seventeen, one adds the five organs of action—organ of generation, organ of excretion, hands, feet and tongue. This makes it twenty-two and one adds pride (ego) and the soul.

[169] The five organs of sense and the mind.

[170] Between contrary sentiments.

[171] The text says, one who behaves like an arya.

[172] Prana is the breath of life or the life force. Prana draws breath into the body, apana exhales it. Vyana distributes it through the body and samana assimilates it. Udana gives rise to sound.

[173] There seems to be some repetition in the text.

[174] This is a reference to the five senses, the five organs of action and the mind.

[175] The human soul, as opposed to the divine and universal soul, brahman or paramatman.

[176] Kshetra is the field, that is, the body. Kshetrajna is one who knows the body, that is, the soul, both human and universal.

[177] There are actually fourteen worlds (lokas), seven above and seven below. This is a reference to the seven above—*bhurloka, kharloka, svarloka, maharloka, janarloka, taparloka* and *satyaloka (brahmaloka).*

[178] Koushika.

[179] Parashurama.

[180] The word used is tata.

[181] Yayati's story appears in several sections, Section 33 is an instance. The daughter in question is Madhavi, whose sons saved Yayati from the sage Galava.

[182] The word used is tata.

[183] The word used is tata.

[184] Kartikeya.

[185] The Pleiades, the third of the twenty-seven nakshatras.

[186] Agni is the bearer of oblations.

[187]*Prajapatya* is the act of giving away one's possessions before becoming an ascetic.

[188] Jataveda is Agni's epithet, meaning someone who is the source of the Vedas.

[189] Brahma had sons through his mental powers and the third of these was Angiras. Apava is Vasishtha's name. Angiras had several wives, one of whom was named Subha. However, none of these was Vasishtha's daughter. It is possible that the critical edition has got this wrong. For instance, instead of Apava's daughter, some other versions say that Angiras had a wife named Subha and this fits better.

[190]*Raga* means love, passion, affection.

[191] Sinivali is the day preceding the new moon and the moon's crescent is so thin that

it can hardly be seen. Kapardin is Shiva's daughter. It is not clear who is Shiva's daughter. Nothing fits well enough.

[192] Kuhu is the day of the new moon, when the moon is invisible. Because the moon is invisible, it cannot be divided into parts.

[193] Shamyu.

[194] Bharata had a son named Bharata.

[195] To avoid confusion, Viraa and Vira respectively.

[196] In this context, a hymn to the fire.

[197] *Nishchyavana* literally means something that does not fall.

[198] *Vipapa* literally means free from sin.

[199] *Nishkriti* literally means freedom.

[200] Literally, something that goes up.

[201] *Manyu* means wrath or resentment.

[202] Kama has several meanings and one of these is an object of desire. Kama is the fire of passion or desire.

[203] *Amogha* means productive, infallible.

[204] Uktha is a laudatory hymn, usually used for the Sama Veda. The ukthas were divided into three categories. Sakamashva is a specific hymn from the Sama Veda. It has its roots in *sakam* (together with) and ashva (horse), since one went to heaven together with the horse.

[205] Vyahritis are sacred and mystical words. They are usually mentioned as three —*bhuh, bhuvah* and *svah. Mahah* is added as the fourth, the fifth varying according to context.

[206] Panchajanya is the name of Krishna's conch shell. But here, it means 'five people'.

[207] Brihat and rathantara are tones or melodies for chanting Sama Veda hymns. It is not obvious why these should be described as stealers of energy or vigour.

[208] *Udatta* is a high-pitched accent and *anudatta* is a low-pitched one.

[209] There are four types of officiating priests—hotar (one who recites from the Rig Veda), udgatar (one who recites from the Sama Veda), adhvaryu (one who recites from the Yajur Veda) and brahman (one who recites from the Atharva Veda).

[210] Panchajanya.

[211] The word *bharana* means to sustain. Pushtimati seems to be another name for Bharata. The word *pushti* means nourishment or development.

[212] The word *shiva* means lucky, auspicious, propitious.

[213] Austerities personified. This is probably another name for Panchajanya.

[214] While Urjaskara and Havyavahana are clear, it is not obvious who the other three in the listing of five are. Probably, Ushma, Shambu and Avasathya.

[215] The lord of the cows is the sun. When the sun sets, it is night and the time for demons.

[216] Balada, Manyumat, Vishnu and Agrayana.

[217] The god of rain, Indra.

[218] Another of Manu's sons.

[219] The trails of smoke.

[220] The sage Kapila propounded sankhya yoga.

[221] Tapas.

[222] The text actually says *grihapati*. Garhapatya is the fire that burns in the household and is the son of Saha Apa and Mudita.

[223] The Niyata or Kratu fire is the fire that burns the dead. Here, it is being equated with Bharata.

[224] Agni.

[225] Angiras.

[226] The story of Agni's fleeing and curse on the fish isn't explained in the Mahabharata. But it occurs elsewhere and there are various reasons why Agni fled—to perform austerities, and because Agni is a polluter, since Agni devours everything, including the dead.

[227] Presumably, crystal, emeralds and black iron.

[228] Atharva.

[229] The five rivers are Shatadru, Vipasha, Iravati, Chandrabhaga and Vitasta.

[230]*Adbhuta* means extraordinary and wonderful. But here, Adbhuta is being used as a proper name for the primeval fire.

[231] Type of soma sacrifice.

[232] Indra. Literally, the sacker of cities.

[233] The name of a demon.

[234] Indra.

[235] Indra killed a demon named Paka.

[236] Indra's name. Literally, the performer of one hundred sacrifices.

[237] Literally, *devasena* means the army of the gods, while *daityasena* means the army of the daityas.

[238] In this context, Dakshayani means Daksha's daughter. Daksha's daughter was Aditi and she married Kashyapa. The Adityas or gods, including Indra, were born from this union. Several of Daksha's daughters were married to Kashyapa and Kashyapa was Devasena's father. However, it is not obvious which of Daksha's daughters, one of Aditi's sisters, was Devasena's mother.

[239] Indra.

[240] Mountain from which the sun rises.

[241] The ocean.

[242] Parva means part or division and this probably means the twenty-four hours.

[243] The rishis.

[244] The rishis.

[245]*Chandralekha.*

[246] Strictly speaking, Shivaa.

[247] The other wives.

[248] The other wives.

[249] Garudi is the feminine of the Garuda bird. Garuda is also known as Suparna and Suparni is the feminine.

[250] Vasishtha's wife.

[251] Skanda is another name for Kartikeya or Kumara. Guha is another of his names, as is Mahasena. *Skanna* means fallen or fallen down, and Skanda is derived from that.

[252] Shiva is the slayer of Tripura.

[253] The word used is *tamrachuda*. This means cock. But since *tamra* also means coppery red, the cock may have had this hue.

[254] There are thirteen *samskaras* or sacraments. The list varies a bit. But one list is *vivaha* (marriage), *garbhalambhana* (conception), *pumshavana* (engendering a male child), *simantonnayana* (parting the hair, performed in the fourth month of pregnancy), *jatakarma* (birth rites), *namakarana* (naming), *chudakarma* (tonsure), *annaprashana* (first solid food), *keshanta* (first shaving of the head), *upanayana* (sacred thread), *vidyarambha* (commencement of studies), *samavartana* (graduation) and *antyeshti* (funeral rites).

[255] These divine mothers are sometimes described as companions of Shiva, sometimes as companions of Skanda. Their number is usually given as seven or eight, and more rarely, sixteen.

[256] The mothers.

[257] Agni.

[258] These sentences are a bit obscure. Agni is often associated with a goat,

specifically, a ram. So is Skanda. Both Agni and Skanda are referred to as Naigameya and in this form, Skanda cures children of ailments. The mother who is the daughter of the ocean of blood is Krura.

259 Victory over Skanda.

260 Airavata is Indra's elephant.

261 Vishakha is also one of Skanda's names. The word *vish* means to enter, and Vishakha is derived from that.

262 Kumara's epithet.

263 Meaning infant or child.

264 There is an anomaly in the numbers. The number of mothers (*matrikas*) is sometimes given as seven, sometimes as eight. Seven is also associated with the six stars of the Pleiades (*krittika*). One sentence in the text mentions seven mothers, but the next sentence suggests eight. Krittika (krittikas in the plural) is the third of the twenty-seven nakshatras. Reared by the Krittikas, Skanda was named Kartikeya. The six wives of the rishis became the Krittikas.

265 Skanda.

266 This is a reference to Svaha having adopted the forms of the wives of the rishis on six separate nights.

267 The word used is tata.

268 Indra.

269 Held over Skanda's head.

270 Shiva.

271 Shiva's consort, Uma.

272 Shiva. Literally, the one with a bull on his banner. Rudra is also Shiva's name.

273 More correctly, placed there by Svaha in the form of the six wives.

274 The rooster or the cock is Skanda's emblem. The peacock became his mount later.

275 Skanda's name.

276 Brahma.

277 Lakshmi was personified in the form of Devasena. Lakshmi is also known as Shri.

278*Panchami* is the fifth lunar day.

279 Tithi is a lunar day and shashthi means the sixth. Shashthi is also one of Devasena's names.

280 The text says *devasenapati*. This can mean either general of the gods, or Devasena's husband. Both are equally correct.

[281] Skanda.

[282] The twenty-seven nakshatras were Daksha's daughters and were married to Chandra, the moon. Krittika is the third, Rohini is the fourth, Dhanishtha is the twenty-third. Abhijit is not one of the twenty-seven, but has been added as a twenty-eighth, between the twenty-first and the twenty-second. The story in the text is clearly about the order of these nakshatras. Rohini was the first because Chandra loved her the most.

[283] The time that the dislodged nakshatra was supposed to measure.

[284] One can visualize the major stars of Pleiades arranged in the form of a cart.

[285] Vinata is Garuda's mother. However, Svaha assumed the form of a Garudi. So this Vinata means Svaha, rather than the Vinata who is Garuda's mother.

[286] Probably because their husbands had abandoned them.

[287] It now becomes clear that these other mothers are the natural mothers of children.

[288] A graha is something that seizes or grasps, that is, it is an evil spirit. It is also possible, in this context, to interpret a graha as a disease.

[289] Literally, Skanda's falling sick, or Skanda's epilepsy.

[290] The Kumaras.

[291] The name of a tree used for medicinal purposes.

[292] The number eighteen is not clearly explained. It could be Skandapasmara, Shakuni, Putana, Shitaputana, Revati, Mukhamandika, Surabhi, Sarama and Karanji (adding up to nine) and devagraha, pitrigraha, *siddhagraha, rakshasagraha, yakshagraha, pishachagraha, gandharvagraha* (adding up to seven) mentioned a little later, with perhaps Vinata and Kadru added. Alternatively, children are believed to suffer from nine different kinds of diseases or afflictions. Eighteen might mean these nine diseases and the nine mothers who preside over these diseases.

[293] The mother.

[294] Kadru is the mother of serpents. Arishta is the mother of gandharvas and Muni is the mother of apsaras, and Arishta and Muni are Kadru's sisters. But here, Kadru seems to be the mother of gandharvas and apsaras.

[295] Perhaps implying that the foetus does not move and is dead.

[296] Literally, someone whose path is red.

[297] Two beings. The first is masculine and Minjika, and the latter is feminine and Minjikaa. They are worshipped by those who wish to ensure the welfare of children.

[298] Alternatively, as a proper name, the river Lohita or Brahmaputra.

[299] Mountain, river, sun, earth and trees.

[300] The arka tree is the sun-plant, a small tree with medicinal uses. In the *Skanda*

Purana, the five ganas are named Dharma, Gyana, Vairagya, Aishvarya and Adharma.

[301] Minjikaa.

[302] Indra's elephant.

[303] Samtanaka is one of the five trees in Indra's celestial pleasure garden. Parijata is another.

[304] Kind of tree.

[305] The China rose.

[306] Shiva. Pashupati is another of Shiva's names.

[307] Bhadravata, to the east of Kailasa, is one of the three places where Shiva is said to reside.

[308] Indra's bow is the rainbow.

[309] Kubera is the lord of riches. He is known as Naravahana because he rides a man. Pushpaka is Kubera's chariot.

[310] Jambhakas are demons or evil spirits. They are also Shiva's companions.

[311] In addition to Rudra being Shiva's name, there were also minor gods (eleven in number) known as Rudras.

[312] Death.

[313] Kamandalu.

[314] The words Bhrigu and Angiras are in the plural, suggesting those of these two lineages, rather than Bhrigu and Angiras individually.

[315] Shiva.

[316] The moon.

[317] The text actually says Vrishaketana, but Vrishadhvaja and Vrishaketana have the same meaning.

[318] Shiva.

[319] Missiles that can kill one hundred at one go.

[320] Rudra.

[321] Meaning Shiva.

[322] Indra.

[323] The one with three eyes, Shiva.

[1] Droupadi is actually Krishnaa, though it has been written as Krishna.

[2] The Pandavas had other wives too. Bhima was married to Hidimba. Arjuna was married to Subhadra, Ulupi and Chitrangada. Nakula was married to Karenumati and Sahadeva to Vijaya.

[3] The singular is used in the text.

[4] Kunti.

[5] A snataka is a brahmana who has completed his period of celibate student life and is about to step into the householder stage.

[6] Pradyumna's mother is Krishna's wife Rukmini.

[7] Bhanu was the son of Krishna and Satyabhama.

[8] Balarama.

[9] That is, Krishnaa or Droupadi.

[10] Shouri is Krishna's name.

[1] The Kamyaka forest.

[2] That is, Dhritarashtra.

[3] That is, the Pandavas.

[4] Ranku is a kind of antelope.

[5] Karna.

[6] Shakuni.

[7] The four types of weapons are amukta (those not released, like swords), mukta (those released, like chakras), muktamukta (those that can be released or not released, like spears) and yantramukta (those released from a machine or implement, like arrows).

[8] Arjuna, Gandiva and the celestial weapons.

[9] Subala's son, Shakuni.

[10] Duryodhana.

[11] Indra killed a demon named Shambara.

[12] The sun.

[13] Indra.

[14] The moon is the king of the nakshatras.

[15] The plural is used, meaning Duryodhana and his brothers.

[16] Vidura.

[17] Arjuna.

[18]*Kashaya*, red or ochre, is the colour of an ascetic's robes.

[19] That is, Arjuna.

[20] Bhishma.

[21] Stations where the cowherds assemble cattle.

[22] The palms of their hands. A more contemporary rendering would be that they shook hands.

[23] The son of Radha, Karna.

[24] The Pandavas.

[25] Droupadi.

[26] Arjuna.

[27] The numbering and branding of the cattle.

[28] Duryodhana.

[29] From the lake. A gavyuti is a measure of distance, equal to two kroshas (four

miles) or one krosha (two miles).

[30]*Gavaya.*

[31] Sadyaska is a kind of sacrifice, meaning either a new sacrifice, or a sacrifice that is completed in a single day.

[32] Gandharvas can fly in the sky. Chitrasena is the king of the gandharvas.

[33] Vaikartana is Karna's name. Radheya is also Karna's name.

[34] Arrows with sharp heads in the form of horseshoes.

[35] Small arrows.

[36] Missiles or arrows.

[37] Arrows with heads like the teeth of a calf.

[38] Of the chariot.

[39] A chariot was surrounded by a wooden fender that acted like armour. This was called *varutha.*

[40] Trivenu means three bamboo poles. One doesn't know what part of the chariot this is, except that it is clearly a joint.

[41] These, and the names that follow, are of Duryodhana's brothers.

[42] Duryodhana and his army.

[43] The word used is tata.

[44] Yudhishthira.

[45] The word used is tata.

[46] Chitrasena.

[47] Yudhishthira's charioteer.

[48] The word used is tata.

[49] Yudhishthira is engaged in a sacrifice.

[50] Yudhishthira's name.

[51] Yudhishthira is the senior.

[52] The gandharvas.

[53] Meaning, the gandharvas.

[54] The word used is tata.

[55] Of the gandharvas.

[56] All of these are celestial weapons. It is impossible to be more specific than that. Sthunakarna literally means something that has a pillar for its ears. Soura, agneya and soumya are named after the sun, the fire and the moon respectively. Literally, indrajala

means Indra's net and stands for something magical.

57 Chitrasena.

58 Weapon that is aimed at the source of a sound, without the target being seen.

59 Sections 32 (Volume 2) and 35 have said that Arjuna learnt singing and dancing from Chitrasena in heaven and that Chitrasena became his friend.

60 Presumably, Chitrasena was fighting feebly because he knew that it was his friend Arjuna.

61 As will be evident in a short while, this is a reference to Indra.

62 Droupadi.

63 Duryodhana's.

64 This is Yudhishthira speaking.

65 The word used is tata.

66 Amrita.

67 The word used is tata.

68 Infantry, horses, elephants and chariots.

69 Karna, Radha's son.

70 These words were spoken by Duryodhana's advisers and soldiers.

71 The gandharvas.

72 Another name for Hastinapura. *Varana* means elephant.

73 Ashvatthama.

74 Indra.

75 Duhshasana.

76 Duryodhana's.

77 Thus imbibing their wisdom.

78 Darbha or kusha is a sacred grass.

79 Because of Duryodhana's decision. Duryodhana was born on earth to accomplish the tasks of the demons. If he died through fasting, that purpose would not be accomplished.

80 Kritya is a she-demon or a malevolent goddess.

81 Strictly speaking, rasatala. There are seven nether regions—atala, vitala, sutala, rasatala, talatala, mahatala and patala.

82 Shiva.

83 The text uses both *astra* and *shastra*. These are both weapons and the words are

often used synonymously. However, an astra is a weapon that is hurled or released, while a shastra is held in the hand.

[84] Since Maheshvara is mentioned, the goddess probably means Parvati.

[85] The text uses both astra and shastra.

[86] Shastras.

[87] Naraka is a demon who had been killed by Krishna.

[88] Indra.

[89] Samshaptakas are warriors who have taken an oath in battle, either to kill the enemy or fall in battle.

[90] The qualities of passion and darkness respectively.

[91] Arjuna.

[92] Duryodhana.

[93] The word used is tata.

[94] Karna.

[95] Duryodhana is speaking.

[96] The messenger addressed Yudhishthira.

[97] Shastra and astra respectively.

[98] Vidura's name. The word means the son of a shudra mother and a kshatriya father.

[99] Arjuna.

[100] Duryodhana.

[101] The name of Kubera's pleasure garden.

[102] One of Arjuna's names.

[1] The deer that had not been killed so far.

[2] Yudhishthira’s charioteer.

[1] It is not obvious who is meant.

[2] Collecting grains of rice that would be left around markets.

[3] Literally, a sacrifice that satisfies one's wishes.

[4] Durvasa.

[5] Because there were no leftovers, the food could not increase.

[6] Mudgala.

[7] Durvasa.

[8] Mudgala.

[9] The messenger of the gods.

[10] Since Mudgala has walked seven steps with the messenger of the gods, he can presume the messenger to be a friend.

[11] Mudgala is being addressed thus because the Moudgalya lineage originated with him.

[12] The Vishvadevas.

[13] The text says *yaamaas*, in the plural. Yaamaas are precepts of social discipline that are an integral part of yoga, in combination with *niyama.* This must be a personification of that.

[14] A dhama is a sacred place of pilgrimage and in the plural, these must be personifications of those.

[15] The name of Indra's pleasure garden.

[16] The Ribhus are Vedic gods, identified with the rays of the sun. They are often Indra's companions. There are three gods—Ribhu, Vaja and Vibhvan, collectively known as the Ribhus. In later myths, Ribhu became Brahma's son.

[17] The Ribhus.

[18]*Kalpa*, one of Brahma's days, a very long period of time.

[19] The critical text uses the word loka. Some other versions say deva. Deva is more appropriate, since there are thirty-three gods.

[20] Ayuta, also meaning ten thousand.

[21] A lower order in rebirth.

[22] The word used is tata, used affectionately towards any senior.

[23] Nirvana, a word with many different nuances. While it means extinction or extinguishing, it stands for absolute extinction or annihilation and the final emancipation and bliss that comes from union with the supreme soul.

[1] Jayadratha was already married to Duhshala, Duryodhana's sister.

[2] Dhata and Vidhata are different manifestations of the creator. Vibhu means Brahma, Vishnu or Shiva. Savita is the sun-god.

[3] Jayadratha is described as the king of Sindhu, Souvira and Shibi. Souvira and Shibi were kingdoms adjacent to Sindhu and had probably been conquered by Jayadratha.

[4] Jayadratha.

[5] Kotikashya is the king of Shibi.

[6] And not spend any more time in conversation.

[7] Yudhishthira.

[8] Jaya is Arjuna's name.

[9] This isn't made explicit. Six others could have entered the cottage with Jayadratha, but this doesn't sound plausible, especially since we don't know who these other six were. It could be that the cottage normally held six—the five Pandavas and Droupadi. In that sense, Jayadratha was the seventh in the cottage.

[10] Sharabha has different meanings. In this context, it probably means a young elephant.

[11] Kind of deer.

[12] Arjuna's name.

[13] Different dynasties and lineages are listed in different places. They don't quite add up to seventeen, the number is actually more. So it isn't clear which are the seventeen Jayadratha is referring to.

[14] Valour, power, poise, dexterity, generosity and kingship.

[15] Krishna and Arjuna. Though rarely used, Krishna is also a name for Arjuna.

[16] Arjuna's name. Literally, the one with a diadem on his head.

[17] Krishna.

[18] Garuda.

[19] From the region of the Sindhu.

[20] Yudhishthira.

[21] Where the hermitage was.

[22] The chariots.

[23] The maid's suggestion is fairly obvious. Jayadratha may rape Droupadi, or force her to submit against her wishes.

[24] Alternatively, lily.

[25]*Mridanga.*

[26] Makara is a mythical aquatic animal, which can be translated as crocodile or shark.

[27] Freed of their lives.

[28] Arjuna.

[29] Yudhishthira.

[30] Yudhishthira.

[31] Yudhishthira.

[32]*Vipatha*, a kind of large arrow.

[33] Kotikashya.

[34] An unrivalled warrior, whose valour is unlimited, greater than a maharatha.

[35] From his chariot.

[36] Probably Sahadeva, since Nakula's chariot had been destroyed.

[37] Arjuna.

[38] Jayadratha.

[39] Arjuna.

[40] Yudhishthira.

[41] Leaving five tufts is the standard practice at the time of tonsuring.

[42] Jayadratha.

[43] Arjuna's. Both Bhima and Arjuna are Pritha's sons, or Parthas.

[44] Yudhishthira.

[45] Jayadratha.

[46] Shiva. Vrishadhvaja is also Shiva's name. And Shiva is also the three-eyed one.

[47] Janaka's daughter, Sita.

[48] Vishvakarma, the architect of the gods.

[49] Brahma.

[50] There is some divergence with standard accounts. In standard accounts, the sage Vishrava is the son of the sage Pulasyta. Vishrava had two sons from two different wives —Kubera and Ravana. Both of them are thus known as Vaishravana. Kubera is the lord of riches and also has a son named Nalakubara. He is also friendly with Ishana (Shiva). In all accounts, Kubera originally ruled over Lanka. Kubera is also a lokapala (guardian of the world).

[51] The text uses the word *rajaraja*. Raja is king, but the word raja also means yaksha. So Rajaraja is the king of the yakshas. Kubera is known as Naravahana because he has a

man (nara) as his mount (vahana).

[52] Dashagriva is Ravana's name, meaning ten-headed, or more accurately, ten-necked.

[53] This is probably a reference to the five sacred fires—dakshina, garhapatya, ahavaniya, sabhya and avasathya.

[54] Ravana, the one with ten faces.

[55] This means that Ravana had successively offered more than one head into the fire.

[56]*Bhutas* or ghosts.

[57] Kubera.

[58] Meaning Kubera.

[59] Kubera.

[60] The word *rava* means to scream or roar.

[61] Agni's name.

[62] Brahma.

[63] Sita. The daughter of the king of Mithila, that is, Janaka.

[64] The word *rama* means pleasing, delightful, gratifying.

[65]*Yuvaraja*. Literally, the young king.

[66] Rama's.

[67] Spelt as Kousalya, rather than Koushalya, here.

[68] Kaikeyi.

[69] Raghava is Rama's name, because one of his ancestors was Raghu.

[70] Janaka's kingdom was Videha and its capital was Mithila. So Sita is known as Vaidehi and Maithili.

[71] Bharata and Shatrughna were away at the time, visiting their maternal uncles.

[72] In Satna district of Madhya Pradesh. The Chitrakuta region spills over into Uttar Pradesh too.

[73] Bharata did not return to Ayodhya, awaiting Rama's return. He chose a place named Nandigrama, a short distance away from Ayodhya. He had brought back Rama's sandals and placed these on the throne, as a symbol of kingship.

[74] Khara's younger brother.

[75] They were severed by Lakshmana.

[76] Ravana.

[77] Coastal town in Karnataka, with a famous Shiva temple.

[78] Respectively, Maricha and Ravana. Maricha is doing the initial speaking.

[79] Rama's name, because Kakutstha was one of his ancestors and Raghu was Kakutstha's son.

[80] Funeral rites, since Maricha knew that he was certain to die.

[81] *Tridanda*, the mark of a mendicant who has renounced the world. Three poles are tied together as one and held in the right hand.

[82] The nakshatra Mrigashira, or deer's head in the sky, straddling Taurus and Gemini. Also known as Margashirsha. The twenty-seven nakshatras are sometimes described as Brahma's daughters and Brahma lusted after Rohini, chasing her in the form of a deer or antelope. Shiva (Rudra) pursued the deer and cut off one of its heads. This became Mrighashira.

[83] A rakshasa.

[84] *Madhvika*.

[85] Dasharatha's.

[86] From Ravana's body.

[87] Sumitra's son, Lakshmana.

[88] *Kabandha* means a headless trunk and Kabandha is the name of a rakshasa.

[89] Lakshmana.

[90] Lakshmana.

[91] The name of a tree.

[92] Kamalas and utpalas respectively.

[93] Vali's wife.

[94] The moon is the lord of the stars.

[95] Tara was earlier married to Sugriva.

[96] So that Rama could distinguish Sugriva from Vali.

[97] Indra's pleasure garden.

[98] *Karabha*, alternatively, young elephant.

[99] Rama.

[100] The south is the direction of death, and of ghosts and demons.

[101] The god of love.

[102] Tree (*vriksha*) that grants everything one desires (*kalpa*).

[103] Religious fig tree.

[104] The god of love has the flower as a banner.

[105] One crore is ten million.

[106] The lords (pala) or guardians of the worlds (loka) are usually four in number—Indra, Agni, Varuna and Yama.

[107] Ravana's wife.

[108] Rajaraja.

[109] Makara is a mythical aquatic creature and the god of love has the makara as his banner.

[110] The word used is *shashalakshana*, marked by the sign of the rabbit, that is, the moon.

[111] Kumuda, utpala and padma respectively.

[112] The text uses the word *gopuccha*, meaning one with a cow's tail. This is a specific type of monkey.

[113] Hanuman.

[114] Sugriva.

[115] From the cave.

[116] Garuda is Vinata's son.

[117] A female demon named Surasa who tried to obstruct Hanuman's leap.

[118] Hanuman would not have known about this incident otherwise.

[119] The enemy will find it easier to attack if the force is divided.

[120] Varuna, the lord of the waters.

[121] Ikshvaku was the son of Manu and Manu was the son of the sun-god. As sons of Aditi, the sun-god and Varuna are brothers.

[122] The ocean.

[123] The architect of the gods.

[124] Kind of tree and its wood.

[125] The text has the word *karnatta yantra*. This is difficult to translate. Yantra is a machine and can also be a watchtower. Karnatta should mean in the shape of an ear, but an ear-shaped watchtower sounds odd. However, karnatta yantra also means a catapult.

[126] Weapons capable of killing one hundred at a time.

[127]*Madhuchhishta.* Presumably, there was poison in the beeswax.

[128] Angada.

[129] Jambavan.

[130] Rama.

[131] Karabha, alternatively, young elephant.

[132] A *vyuha* is a battle formation. This one is named after Ushanas or Shukracharya, the preceptor of the demons.

[133] The preceptor of the gods.

[134] Lakshmana.

[135] Kumbhakarna.

[136] Here, the text uses the word nairrita (meaning demon), rather than rakshasa.

[137] Indra. Indrajit was originally named Meghanada and came to be called Indrajit because he vanquished Indra in battle. Indrajit could remain invisible while fighting and also possessed many celestial weapons.

[138] Prajna means intelligence or wisdom.

[139] Vishalya means freedom from trouble or anxiety and more specifically, something that removes a stake or a thorn.

[140] The word used is Rajaraja.

[141] Indrajit had not performed his daily rites and was therefore weak.

[142] It isn't clear from the Mahabharata what kind of a weapon a bhushundi was. It was a weapon that was hurled and could have been a simple rock. However, in descriptions of the Kurukshetra War, it seems to have been more sophisticated than a simple rock.

[143] Brahma.

[144] The five elements.

[145] Nalakubara.

[146] Indra's wife, Shachi, was the daughter of Puloma.

[147] Matali, Indra's charioteer.

[148] Makaras.

[149] Vishvakarma constructed Pushpaka vimana for Kubera. Ravana possessed it, when he drove Kubera out of Lanka.

[150] Yuvaraja.

[151] The road he had followed when exiled.

[152] Hanuman.

[153] Bharata.

[154] Rama.

[155] Another name for the nakshatra Shravana.

[156] Kubera.

[157] The text uses the word *jaruthyan*. This means three times the normal dakshina, or three different types of dakshina.

[158] By implication, by travelling along this path. Vritra and Namuchi were demons killed by Indra. Dirghajihva was also a demoness killed by Indra.

[159] The gayatri or savitri mantra, dedicated to Savita, the sun-god, and personified in feminine form. In this personified feminine form, Savitri is also Brahma's consort.

[160] The sacrificial fire.

[161] Brahma.

[162] Suggesting that the king should not object because he had only received the boon of one daughter.

[163] Ashvapati's wife was from Malava.

[164] The moon.

[165] The mantra.

[166] The goddess Lakshmi.

[167]*Satya* means truth. Satyavan means someone who follows the truth.

[168]*Chitra* means painting and ashva means horse.

[169] Rantideva was a king of the lunar dynasty, known for his generosity.

[170] This story has been told in Section 33.

[171] Yayati figures in several sections, such as Section 33.

[172]*Ritvijas*, officiating priests at sacrifices.

[173] Dyumatsena and Ashvapati respectively.

[174] Gift given to a guest.

[175] Ashvapati.

[176] That is, neither is permanent.

[177] The word used is *arha* and it is possible to interpret this as a dowry.

[178] Red or ochre garments are worn by ascetics.

[179] That is, the cause of success.

[180] On the last day.

[181] The word used is yuga. A relatively rare meaning of yuga is four, the relevant meaning here. One probably means that the sun had arisen four *hastas* (hands) or cubits.

[182] The mother-in-law.

[183] Small measure of time, but also forty-eight minutes.

[184] Instant, measure of time equal to four-fifths of a second.

[185] The south is the direction of death.

[186] In a marriage, husband and wife take seven steps around the fire together.

[187] The word *yama* means restraint or control.

[188] Vivasvat is the sun-god and Yama is his son.

[189] In the case of the other boons, Yama had qualified it by saying that Savitri could not ask for Satyavan's life. In this case, that caveat wasn't mentioned.

[190] The vessel used for collecting fruit.

[191] Goutama's disciple.

[192] Dyumatsena.

[193] The goddess Savitri.

[194] Dyumatsena.

[195] Elephants, horses, chariots and infantry.

[196] Yuvaraja.

[197] Markandeya.

[1] Heaven, where Arjuna had gone to obtain divine weapons.

[2] Yudhishthira.

[3] Vibhavasu is the sun-god's name and Karna was his son.

[4] Indra killed a demon named Paka.

[5] Karna was naturally born with these.

[6] The sun is the lord of the cows.

[7] Bala and Vritra were demons killed by Indra.

[8] Svarbhanu is a name for Rahu, who causes eclipses.

[9] Because he was brought up by Radha, Radheya is Karna's name.

[10] Vishakha is the twenty-first of the twenty-seven nakshatras. It has four main stars and the name itself means one that is fork-shaped, with branches, usually interpreted as possessing two forks or branches. That is because the two forks are identified with Indra and Agni.

[11] Jamadagni's son is Parashurama.

[12] Indra.

[13] Shakti.

[14] Because Surya had appeared to him in a dream. Having awoken, Karna now told Surya about the dream.

[15] Vrisha is Karna's name.

[16] Kuntibhoja was Kunti or Pritha's father. The brahmana in question was the sage Durvasa.

[17] The story of Agastya's destruction of Vatapi has been told in Section 33. The Talajangha connection is less direct. The Talajanghas were destroyed by Sagara and the brahmana Aurva gave Sagara the weapon for the destruction.

[18] Shura was Kuntibhoja's friend and Kuntibhoja had no offspring. So Shura gave Pritha to Kuntibhoja as an adopted daughter.

[19] Shura.

[20] The Chyavana–Sukanya story has been recounted in Section 33.

[21] The Atharva Veda.

[22] Durvasa.

[23] The root *kan* means satisfied or pleased. While kanya can rightly be translated as maiden or young girl, it specifically also means a virgin or a girl who is ten years old.

[24] In the sense of being free to unite.

[25] Earrings and armour.

[26] Kashyapa's wife, the mother of the gods, who are therefore known as Adityas.

[27] The word used is *nabhi*, which translates as navel. However, nabhi also means the central point.

[28] Meaning Kuntibhoja.

[29] The moon.

[30] To make it waterproof.

[31] Another name for the river Ganga.

[32]*Vasu* means wealth or riches, as well as gold.

[33] Varana means elephant and Varanasahrya is another name for Hastinapura.

[34] Rama is Parashurama. Five types of weapons are mukta (those that are released from the hand, like a chakra), amukta (those that are never released, like a sword), muktamukta (those that can be released or not released, like a spear), yantramukta (those that are released from an implement, like an arrow) and mantramukta (magical weapons unleashed with incantations). Of these, the text is referring to the first four.

[35] Arjuna.

[36] Another name for Surya.

[37] Arjuna.

[38] A reference to Vishnu's boar (varaha) incarnation.

[39]*Kartana* means to cut or slice. However, Vikartana is the name of the sun-god and the sun-god's son is Vaikartana.

[40] Jayadratha.

[1] Yudhishthira.

[2] Yudhishthira.

[3] Used to light a fire through friction.

[4] The word used is tata, which means son. But it is affectionately used for anyone who is younger.

[5] The word used is tata, which means son. But it is affectionately used for anyone who is younger.

[6] The word used is tata, which means son. But it is affectionately used for anyone who is younger.

[7] Vijaya is Arjuna's name, as is Bibhatsu, or Gudakesha. Shvetavahana (meaning the one whose steeds are white) is also one of Arjuna's names and so is Savyasachi.

[8] The word used is tata, which means son. But it is affectionately used for anyone who is younger.

[9] The architect of the gods.

[10] Five-leafed tree (*Vitex negundo*) with medicinal properties, also known as *nirgundi.*

[11] Flowering plant.

[12] Kind of tree.

[13] The sacred fig tree.

[14] Lokapalas.

[15] Shakuni.

[16] The word used is tata, which means son. But it is affectionately used for anyone who is younger.

[17] The yaksha has said that he is a crane.

[18] The four Pandavas.

[19] Specifically, the shrutis or revealed texts.

[20] The word used is *dvitiyavana*, meaning one who has a second. But the meaning remains obscure. However, *dvitiya* also means the second in a family, that is, a son. Perhaps the sense is that one obtains a son through perseverance.

[21] Prana.

[22] The critical edition uses the word *pravadatam*, meaning those who speak. Some other versions use the word *prasavatam*, meaning those who are born. Since the answer is a son, the latter fits better than the former.

[23] The critical edition uses the word *nrinam*, meaning men. Some other versions use the word *trinam*, meaning grass. Grass does fit better than men.

[24] The three Vedas—Rig Veda, Sama Veda and Atharva Veda.

[25] The water.

[26] Meaning *brahma muhurta*, those specific times of the day that are regarded as being presided over by the brahmana. They occur towards the early part of the day.

[27] The five qualities of equanimity, self-control, abstinence, control of the senses and yoga.

[28] Hunger, thirst, sorrow, delusion, fear and death. Hunger and thirst occur early in life, sorrow and delusion later and fear and death right at the end.

[29] The brahmana's.

[30] The restoration to life of the four Pandavas and the encounter between the father (Dharma) and the son (Yudhishthira).

[31] The Pandavas and the ascetics respectively.

[32] Shakuni.

[33] Pursued by Vritra, Indra hid inside a mountain.

[34] Hayashira (head of a horse) or Hayagriva (neck of a horse) is one of Vishnu's incarnations. Vishnu, as an Aditya, is also Aditi's son. There are different stories associated with Hayashira, some connected with killing a demon named Hayagriva, others connected with the demons Madhu and Kaitabha.

[35] This is a reference to Vishnu's vamana (dwarf) incarnation.

[36] Ourva was the son of Chyavana and the father of Jamadagni. He was born from his mother's thigh (*uru*).

[37] This is a reference to Rama's story.

[38] Arjuna's name, the wielder of the Gandiva.

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